

望公太

汎夕薙

受難の女騎士

Nozomi Kota Presents
ONE TURN KILL,
OF THE DARK PARTISAN.

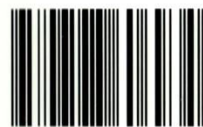
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望公太

黒き英雄の一撃無双

HJ 文庫

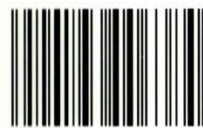
HOBBY JAPAN



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対魔族用の魔法使いを育成する学園で序列一位を誇る才媛・久遠院雪羽は、圧倒的強さの『竜』を前に絶体絶命の危機に陥っていた。しかし颯爽と現れた見知らぬ男・麻上悠理が竜をたったの一撃で倒してしまう。悠理が学園の転入生と知った雪羽は彼の姿を追うが、そこで見たのは「D級」の烙印を押され、魔法の追試験で悪戦苦闘する悠理の姿だった。

HOBBY JAPAN

DARK PARTISAN

ONE
TURN
KILL
OF
THE

"THAT
WAS
CLOSE,
HUH.
LOOKS
LIKE
I
GOT
HERE
JUST
IN
TIME."





辻 Tsuji
Yashiro
A GIRL WHO TOOK
THE SAME MAKEUP
TEST AS IULI.
THE FEELINGS BEHIND
HER EXPRESSIONLESS
FACE IS...

麻上セリア
Asagami Seria
IULI'S LITTLE SISTER
WHO HAS ALSO JOINED THE
MIDDLE SCHOOL SECTION OF
SEISHUN ACADEMY. LOVES
HER BROTHER VERY MUCH
FOR ALWAYS PROTECTING
HER.

久遠院雪羽
Kudoin Yukika
POSSESSES THE HIGHEST RANK
IN HER ACADEMY AND IS THE STRONGEST
MADE IN SEISHUN ACADEMY. WHAT SHE
MAY LACK IN "STRENGTH" SHE MAKES UP
FOR WITH EXTRAORDINARY ZEAL.
WISHES TO JOIN THE KNIGHT SQUAD
MORE THAN ANYTHING.

**ルーシア・フォン・
エルデ・ファーン**
Lucia von Elde Fern
A "WITCH" WHO CAME TO
THE HUMAN WORLD BECAUSE,
"THE DEMON WORLD IS BORING."
SHE HAS BEEN URGING HIM
TO "BECOME HER BOYFRIEND,"
BUT...

麻上悠理 Asagami
Iuli
THE MAIN CHARACTER OF THE STORY
WHO HAS TRANSFERRED TO SEISHUN
ACADEMY FOR REASONS UNKNOWN.
DUE TO A CERTAIN INCIDENT, HE HAS
DEVIATED FROM THE WORLD'S TRUTH
AND IS SAID TO HAVE GAINED THE
WORLD'S STRONGEST POWER.



"I
REFUSE,
YOU
FOOL,"
REPLIED
YUKIHA
AS SHE
DID
EVERYTHING
IN HER
POWER
TO
HIDE HER
EMBARRASS-
MENT.

"HEY,
YUKIHA.
I'VE
FALLEN
IN
LOVE
WITH
YOU
ALL
OVER
AGAIN.
I
KNEW
IT,
LET'S
GET
MARRIED.

PROLOGUE

“If a woman lies then smile and forgive her.
If a woman complains then be quiet and listen to her.
If a woman cries then gently brush her tears away.
But above all else - You are to never strike a woman.
Is that understood, my damned disciple?”

That was the first thing the boy ever learned from his master. As a human being his master was very peculiar. One might say that he was open-hearted but to put it frankly he was nothing more than a hedonist with a personality that couldn't be any worse. He was constantly womanizing and when there was not enough money for lodging they would be forced to sleep outside and live off the land. As a result, the brother and sister went through a lot because of this powerless man.

As a mage he was apparently very skilled however in the area he was just known as a so-called “deviant” and someone who had more enemies than allies. If society were to label him as anything he probably would have been labelled a no-good master. He only met the two siblings by chance and may have very well just made the boy his disciple on a whim but even so the boy was grateful to him and respected him. His master was freed from society's expectations, rules, formalities and wielded an incredible power for which the boy could not help but feel something akin to envy for.

“I want to become him- No, I want to surpass him,” was what the boy thought from the very bottom of his heart.

A few years later, without any warning whatsoever, the boy would end up surpassing his master. He was able to surpass the man he so admired as a “mage” as well as the “deviant” that society had so labelled him and became an even greater deviant than his master was. The boy then strayed from the very world, broke off from it, and deviated altogether.

Chapter 1 – The Academy’s Strongest Girl and the World’s Strongest Boy

“I was careless, wasn’t I,” the girl thought to herself as she had fallen to her knees in the deep forest far from town. Feeling nothing but shame over her own immaturity. Her mana was on the verge of being depleted. The artifact she always used wouldn’t go into its released form and was reverting back to its original form as a short sword. It was thanks to her academy uniform that was made for combat that she was practically unscathed but now that her mana was exhausted she had no means of blocking the next attack. Even if she had been at full strength, she doubted she would have been able to block an attack from a dragon which was what she was facing in that very instant.

It was a black dragon whose massive size even exceeded the trees. Its hard scales showed off a pale glimmer from the early summer sun and its claws were as long as any sword. What’s more, it had a mouth that was very reminiscent of a lizards which boasted sharp fangs as well and from the opening of its mouth one could hear a faint growling coming from deep within. Among all the magic races that pass through the “Gate” dragons are especially powerful.

“This doesn’t look like a dragon that could be defeated by a just few dozen A-rank mages, either,” Yukiha thought to herself.

This time around, the mission Yukiha was tasked with was investigating a “Gate” that incidentally appeared? She was aware that the mission was dangerous and was prepared for a certain degree of combat. However she would never have thought she would be facing down a dragon as she was now. In terms of power dragons pale in comparison to “Witches” and “Vampires” but that does not mean that it is something that a single mage could handle.

“It would seem that I still have a long ways to go,” she thought.

She was probably being too hasty. She wanted to join the Knight Squad as soon as possible and it was due to her eagerness to prove her worth to her superiors that resulted in the situation she was in now. If she died she would lose everything.

In that instant, the dragon opened its mouth wide. Mana then started to concentrate in its mouth and as it started to inhale a magic circle appeared before it bearing a complex design. Humans need to use a medium, their own personal magic item otherwise they wouldn’t be able to use magic. However, magic races hold an even

greater mastery of magic using just their bodies alone that surpasses any human's. The dragon was preparing to unleash a Fifth Level Flame Magic known as "Hell Blaze".

It then launched a giant ball of fire from its mouth. The magic it used to make this fireball was so great that it scorched the air as it was fast approaching her. Yukiha desperately tried to get out of the way of the dragon's attack but she couldn't move her body the way she wanted to. Her knee was broken and she ended up collapsing right then and there.

"Damn. I cannot afford to die in a place like this!" said Yukiha as she gritted her teeth and cursed her own powerlessness, "Mother..."

"Whew! That's hot!"

Of course, that anti-climactic yell was not Yukiha. Had one received a direct hit from such a magic spell they probably would have been reduced to charcoal before even feeling how "hot" it was. Once Yukiha realized that she was not dead she a boy she had never seen before standing before her.

His hair was black and although he had a slender build she did not think him scrawny and then noticed his body had some slight musculature to it. The boy was also wearing a woman's choker around his neck. In addition, she noticed that the boy was wearing the same Seishun Academy uniform for which she was a student there. If he was wearing that uniform then that meant that he had the potential that would let him use magic and become a mage.

"WH-Who are you?!" Yukiha demanded. Though she had asked who he was on reflex, he did not hear her but was busy blowing on his right arm.

"Man that was hot. I thought I was going to get burned," the boy then said.

"Wha-What just happened?! What became of the dragon's attack?!" She asked, bewildered. In what Yukiha saw next she could not help but have her breath taken. Save for where she lay on the ground and the boy stood the forest beside them had been ravaged by fire. By some miracle they weren't burned but Yukiha could see its path of destruction. The fireball had reduced a portion of the forest to a field and the trees and ground around them were incinerated and smoking.

“Impossible,” she thought, “Did he deflect it?! There isn’t anybody who could do such a thing!”

As far as Yukiha could tell, he did not have any sort of weapon at all. He was completely unarmed. He might have been using an artifact but she couldn’t be certain about what sort of medium he was using. Regardless, no matter how strong a mage might be, to be able to deflect a Fifth Level Flame Magic just isn’t possible. Once the boy felt Yukiha’s glaring-like stare the boy then turned her way and said, “That was close, huh. Looks like I got here just in time.”

“Just... Who are you?!”

“Hmmm... I guess I’m the same as you. We’re both mages learning to control our magic,” said the boy as he pointed at both their uniforms. “Though to be honest I can’t really use it so calling me a ‘mage’ is a little weird.”

“I knew it, so you are a mage enrolled at the academy... But I have to say this is the first time I have ever seen you,” she said as she was looking at his face, trying to determine if she had seen him before, but could find no recollection of him. It wouldn’t have been strange if she saw someone as powerful as him on the ranking list. But no, she could not remember seeing him on it.

“Oioi, what’s with the passionate stare? It’s kind of embarrassing when you stare at me like that, you know?”

“Wha-! I was not staring!”

“And for another thing...” the boy continued as he then put his hands in front of him. What the boy did next was clap his hands once then exhaled while making a circle and then proceeded to put his hands out and above his eyes as though he was looking a far distance.

Unable to understand what the boy was doing, Yukiha just frowned at him. All the while searching her memory, to see if he was performing some sort of ritual or something she had seen. Seeing this, the boy started to panic and then tried to explain himself.

“Hu-Huh? You didn’t get it? Come on, knock it off... You’re making me feel like I made a fool of myself...”

“What are you trying to say?”

“Well, I was trying to say... Pan-tsu-maru-mie (which translates to “I can see your panties”)... Ah, come on... don’t make me feel like I have to do that all over again...”

Though boy then seemed depressed as he was going through all the movements once again. Yukiha however, now that he explained that the clues were in the sounds he was making, now understood what he was trying to say.

Yukiha then looked down and finally realized what a shameless position she was in. It was probably due to her evading the dragon’s earlier attacks that her skirt was rolled up almost all the way revealing her underwear underneath. She then frantically pulled her skirt down but it was already too late.

“Wha... Wha... Wha...” were the only words she could muster. She never felt more embarrassed in her life.

“Oh, looks you finally got it. That’s good,” was the boy’s only reply.

“What do you mean, ‘that’s good,’ you pervert!”

“Who’re you calling a pervert? I was even nice enough to tell you.”

“The-Then you should have just come out and said it! Instead you chose to say it in such a roundabout way?!”

“I thought you would be hurt if I did.”

“Well I don’t need you to be considerate in that regard!” said Yukiha as she continued to yell at him. The boy, however, showed no signs of replying to her. He just acted like he didn’t have a care in the world and looked up at the sky as he stretched his arms.

“Well, I’ve got to admit I didn’t expect to see a girl’s panties out in broad daylight like this... Yeah, today was a good day,” he finally replied.

“So you are a pervert, aren’t you?!” Yukiha retorted. Feeling that her chastity was in danger, Yukiha then proceeded to cover her chest and waist when she heard a faint growling which then turned into a massive roar. The black dragon was looking straight at them and looking ready to launch its next attack.

“You, pervert.”

“Huh? Me? I have a really cool name you know. It’s-“

“I couldn’t care less about what your name was. If you are a student of the same academy as I am then you are to contact the Knight Squad right away and ask them to dispatch the Seventh Heaven knights. That is... Just how powerful this dragon is,” said Yukiha as she stood to her feet. Putting her hand to her leg and pushing off the ground and then said, “I will do all I can to buy you time.” Yukiha then went about trying to summon as much mana as she could muster from deep inside herself and concentrate it into the Artifact she held in her hand.

“Crumble and shatter like thin ice
Bloom wildly like a mad bloom.”

Yukiha continued in a dignified tone. Her spinning words together as though she were reading a poem. In order for her to activate her artifact, this incantation was absolutely necessary. Voice, words, and power, It is only when these three conditions are met that they will act as a “catalyst” that will allow the artifact to return to its original form. Now that the Artifact has been given the key allowing it to return to its original form, the Artifact then changed from being a short sword to being a weapon that only Yukiha can use.

“Diamo-“ said Yukiha as the boy interrupted her.

“Hold on, time out,” said the boy as he pushed her shoulder and she lost her balance and collapsed.

“Myan!” cried out Yukiha as the suddenness of his actions caused her to make that sound.

“Haha,” laughed the boy, “What was that? Did you just say ‘myan’?”

“Shu-Shut up! You are the one to blame, after all! Just what do you think you’re doing?!” she demanded.

“Aren’t you worn out? You were barely standing as it is. Don’t push yourself so hard. Just sit back and take it easy,” answered the boy who then redirected his gaze towards the dragon. The boy then took a step forward as though he were trying to hide Yukiha behind him and so as to face off against the beast of incredible magical power. Though the beast he was facing was far larger than himself, Yukiha had the impression that he was neither nervous nor afraid. He was as solid as a rock and he showed no signs of wasted movement. The boy truly seemed to be relaxed.

“Yo, you monster, you’re the kind that understands what I’m saying? Well if you are then let me just tell you that if you apologize now that I’d be willing to let you off for today,” said the boy as he tried chit-chatting with the beast but the dragon completely ignored him. Not only did it not understand him, it had no intention to either way. The dragon’s giant body then moved at incredible speeds and mowed down the boy with a swing of its five claws. Even though Yukiha was as far back as she was she, too, felt the impact of the dragon’s attack.

A vast chunk of the ground had been carved out leaving a deep groove in the ground. The boy, however, was nowhere to be seen.

“You’re ignoring me? Oh well, if that’s the way you want it,” Hearing the boy’s listless voice from above Yukiha then looked up on reflex and could see that he had jumped far into the air. The boy then made his hand into a fist and then pulled back as he was bearing down on the dragon.

“All enemies of girls are my enemies,” the boy then said.

What happened next is hard to explain. For Yukiha, it was almost as if she could not make out what had happened at all. That being said, however, it was not so much a matter of her not seeing his movements or techniques he was using. In fact, it was the complete opposite. What she saw was burned right into her retina and very mind. It was precisely for this reason that she was confused about what she saw. His movements were exceedingly simple. It was a punch. That was all it was. He used nothing but his own strength to deliver a punch to the side of the dragon’s reptilian face. As a result, the dragon collapsed causing the very ground to shake and the battle had ended. The boy was completely and utterly victorious.

Even Though he called himself a mage he didn't use any magic and ended it all with a single punch. The whole thing was just so absurd unexpected even in a way, their meeting each other was a checkered one. She a girl who wanted to become stronger no matter what, him a boy who had become stronger. The two of them were very similar yet dissimilar from each other and it was almost out of pure irony that allowed them to have a chance meeting like this.

Kudoin Yukiha would later find out more about the boy and that his name was Asagami Iuli. He saved her from a desperate situation as well as made an impression on her with his fighting skills. In a world that will see a war between humans and demons after a thousand years he will end up becoming stronger than anyone or anything and the both of them would learn along with each other at Seishun Private Academy.

Seishun Private Academy is an organized anti-magic squad and is one of the lower organizations of the "Gouma Knight Squad." Located in Japan, the massive academy is in the small corner of the local city of Hamaya. On the surface it may just seem like a normal private academy but in reality it is actually a facility that raises mages. A great many students come to the academy, with hopes of joining the knight squad as a goal. They come to the academy to polish their skills so that they may combat the fantastical beings that come from the demon world which are known as the "magic races." At present, the one with the highest rank of number one in the Academy is none other than Kudoin Yukiha.

The reason why the magic races have not been invading the human world all that much is due to a dispute going on in the demon world. Due to a dissonance between the two strongest races in the demon world, the "Witches" and the "Vampires," they split themselves into two factions along with their kinsmen and the two of them had battled with one another for a long while. To put it simply, they just did not have the time to care about humans." The one speaking was the headmaster of the academy and she spoke while quietly watching Yukiha in a seemingly lavish chair. She was a beautiful woman who had a very gentle air about her. Her name was Crowley Himitsu and in addition to serving as headmaster she was also the captain of the Gouma Knight Squad.

"However," she continued on, "three years ago, it ended with the 'Witches' victory. As such, they will probably direct their attention to us humans now. It is expected that we of the Gouma Knight Squad will encounter even fiercer opposition in the times to come." Now looking utterly appalled, the headmaster then went on to say:

“Now then, seeing as how we are at such a critical juncture... Why did you turn in this lie of report to me, Yukiha-san?” Yukiha was silent and didn’t know how to respond. All that she could do then was close her eyes somewhat and lower her head as she made a pained look on her face. Himitsu then picked up some papers from her extravagant desk and then began to read from it:

“A boy suddenly appeared and fought off the dragon with a single punch.’ If you are going to lie to me then why don’t you try making a more convincing lie? Even as a joke it seems to be lacking any sort of humor.”

“Yukiha-san, you truly are a gifted student,” Himitsu then went on to say, “While you were in the middle school section you were certified as an A-Rank mage. Then in your first year of high school you went on to gain the highest rank of 1st in our academy. In all, you have done exceptionally well with attaining such brilliant grades all the while holding the prestigious name of ‘Kudoin’. Once you have graduated it is all but certain that you will join the Knight Squad. Naturally, I too have such expectations of you as well. So... for you to pull such a childish prank was quite a shock.”

“I am... very sorry,” said Yukiha as she bowed her head after considering all the options lying before her. Though she could have gone on and on trying to defend her report she thought there was no chance of the headmaster believing her story. Even as she was standing before her she still doubted that what she had seen was real. Had she been told that it was all a dream she would have found that to be more believable. For example, had someone been told that an Elephant had been defeated by a Hercules Beetle, would anyone believe it? For a person to defeat a magic being with a single punch would be quite an accomplishment and would be nothing short of miraculous.

“Well, I will overlook this incident. You can be a little too serious at times so I am happy to see you pull a prank like this every now and then,” said Himitsu as she smiled at her. Seeing this, Yukiha could not help but feel that it was because the headmaster felt that she was adorable for doing something so stupid and it was then that Yukiha started to harbor thoughts of revenge towards the boy.

So then, the headmaster went on to say, “What truly happened? We did certainly find the dragon’s remains beside the “Gate” that you went to investigate.”

“When I arrived at the gate, the dragon was already dead. I believe it was dealt a fatal wound before it passed through it,” answered Yukiha as she went about making up a story she thought was more believable. Considering the headmaster did not believe her after telling the truth, she had no choice but to make up this story, “I have heard that magic beings will compete with one another when a “Gate” manifests itself. This dragon may have also been in some sort of conflict in the demon world before coming to our world.”

“I see,” said Himitsu as she nodded her head.

The Demon World is another world that exists besides the Human World. Normally the two worlds remain separate however, what with warps in space-time known as “Gates,” it is possible to go from one world to the other. The first one opened was one from one thousand years ago. The two worlds that had been separate all this time began to intertwine and magic beings bringing nothing but disaster to the human world.

“So that is what happened. Well, regardless, you did a good job,” continued the headmaster as a smile began to form on her face. Yukiha then went on to bid the headmaster farewell and leave but just as she was about to she then turned around and said, “Captain Crowley, is it possible to defeat a magic being barehanded and without any magic like I wrote in my report?”

“It is not,” she replied without hesitation, “I am sure it goes without saying but our aptitudes for magic are far different from a magic being’s. A single magic being is worth ten of us. At present, I have heard that the strongest magic beings, the Witches, are worth one hundred of us.” It was probably for this very reason that magic beings started coming into the Human World to begin with. Such is also the reason why humans born with the rare ability to generate mana like magic beings came to be born. Originally, mana was something that only magic beings had. It is the very power of magical beings. Those who are born with that power would then go on to learn the ways of magic, so as to us that power to expel the magic beings from the human world. Just as one would fight fire with fire, it was determined that it would be best to fight magic with magic. Such is the very essence of what a mage is.

“What’s more, the most insidious group of witches, ‘Witch Dystopia,’ who killed the vampire king, has probably gone from having a thousand times more

mana than we do to tens of thousands. Such is what the Knight Squad believes, anyway,” the headmaster continued.

For anyone who has any involvement with the magic races, there isn't anyone who doesn't know the name “Witch Dystopia.” In the Great War that unfolded in the demon world between witches and vampires, the fight ended with the witches killing the vampire king, “Lord Bloody.” We are at an absolute disadvantage in terms of mana and what's more we require mediums so that we may use our magic. However, after many years of fighting, we of the Gouma Knight Squad have succeeded in the development of Artifacts. We were able to combine both the wand and the sword and it is the very product of humanity's wisdom.” Once this was said, Himitsu then shifted her gaze to Yukiha's legs and saw her holder which no doubt housed her artifact. Just as mana was originally something that only the magic races had, magic itself was something that only the magic races could do as well. However, in an effort to make it so that humans could use magic, humans brought about magic implements that became the first mediums. In the past they were either wands or rings which certainly served their purpose but in the present, both weapon and medium have become one in the form of Artifacts which became the mainstream medium of the here and now.

Against the magic races and the immense power they are so proud of, humanity has been able to oppose them with the development of weapons as well as organizational skills, continued Himitsu as she then changed her tone to a more humorous one, “So if you ever see that superhero again then please let me meet him. I will be sure to relinquish my position of captain to him as soon as you do.” You're right... I'm sorry I told you something so strange, replied Yukiha as her head was lowered and she looked back to the whole incident. It was as if the boy's overwhelming strength had been made to ridicule humanity's weapons development and organizational skill, the very products of humanity's wisdom. After that, Yukiha then left the headmaster's office and out into the hallway.

“Yo, Kudoin, what did you do this time?” said a large student in a snide tone. “Being called to the headmaster's office... Does that mean you screwed up your mission? Haha, well suits you right,” continued the boy as he started to laugh and all the boys behind followed suit.

“Is there something you require of me, Sagai-senpai?” replied Yukiha with an irritated look on her face.

Kudoin, haven't you gotten a little cocky since you got 1st out of pure luck? It's not like your ranking in the academy or how many mistakes you make in the practical mean anything, you know, said the boy, continuing on with his sarcasm which only helped to fuel her irritation deep inside her all the more. This fit and well-muscled boy was Sagai Seigen, the former 1st rank of the academy who was now in his senior year. To put it another way, it was her that stole his rank from him. In this April's academy ranking, Yukiha won against Seigen. Being from the Kudoin family, her name spread like wildfire once she enrolled at the academy. If she became someone who was idolized then there would be people who would be bound to feel jealousy towards her abilities and position. The current 2nd rank, Sagai Seigen, was the latter in this case. Whether it had something to do with his being frustrated over his losing to a younger girl, his having some sort of attachment to his now former ranking, or his later falling in the ranks, one if not all of these had something to do with Yukiha.

"I believe I asked you if there was anything you required of me," said Yukiha in a cold tone that wiped the smiles off all their faces. If Seigen was to slander her in any way she was sure to reply in kind. "Did you come all this way not needing anything and just came to ambush me, Sagai-senpai? You must have quite a lot of time on your hands. If you have that much then I am sure you would find it more fruitful to put it towards training. Enough so that you would never lose to me next time."

"I believe I asked you if there was anything you required of me," said Yukiha in a cold tone that wiped the smiles off all their faces. If Seigen was to slander her in any way she was sure to reply in kind. "Did you come all this way not needing anything and just came to ambush me, Sagai-senpai? You must have quite a lot of time on your hands. If you have that much then I am sure you would find it more fruitful to put it towards training. Enough so that you would never lose to me next time." Though Yukiha would usually shrug off Seigen's sarcasm, today she was in a bad mood and, in turn, returned the sarcasm in kind. He was just at the wrong place at the wrong time. For this time a boy whose name she didn't even know had shaken her to her very core.

"You bitch... Don't get cocky just because you beat me once!"

"If you will excuse me then, I have some business to attend to," replied Yukiha as she ignored his shouts and walking down the hallway without waiting for his retort.

She was not lying when she said she had business to attend to. For right now she intended to search for that boy she met earlier that day.

“He was wearing this academy’s uniform,” she thought, “so why do I not remember seeing him before?”

“Please calm down, Seigen-san. You shouldn’t let yourself get all riled up by a girl like that,” said a voice from one of the boys behind him trying to calm him down.

“Shit! Dammit, just what is with this year?! First it was that girl and now it’s this new guy that transferred here!”

“Right, that guy with the choker... There’s something about him that really pisses you off, huh?” After hearing this line, Yukiha stopped dead in her tracks. A male transfer student, a choker, These two pieces of information were swimming around in her head which then lead to Yukiha to turn on her heel and rush after Seigen.

“Huh? Wha-What do you want, Kudoin?! You bitch, you want some of this?!”

“Where did you see him, Sagai-senpai?” asked Yukiha, ignoring his threat, and then asked once more, “Where is that transfer student now?”

The dining hall at Seishun Academy is open until 7PM. The food tastes great, the proportions are large and are reasonably priced for a student’s budget. Among the students and even the teachers this dining hall was exceedingly popular and it was here that two students eagerly awaited their orders at the pickup window leading to the kitchen.

One was a young, child-like girl with blonde hair, big eyes and small mouth. Though she was in a middle school uniform her appearance looked more like she was in elementary school. Next to the girl then was a boy in a high school uniform. He had black hair, a graphic t-shirt under his blazer and a woman’s choker around his neck.

“And here are your orders!” said the energetic lunch lady as she brought their meals to the pickup window, “Here is your deluxe strawberry parfait and here is your stamina, a rice and meat bowl with twice the meat and three times the rice.” The lunch lady then handed the tray with the rice and meat that had pork cutlets, grilled chicken and pieces of steak on top of a mountain of rice to the boy and handed the

girl the chocolate parfait with the whip cream, strawberries and brownie chunks on top. Looking at the orders in front of them, the two of them looked to each other with bitter smiles on their faces.

“Lunch lady, you’ve got it all mixed up. I’m the parfait and my little sister’s the rice and meat bowl,” the boy then stated as he then switched trays with the girl beside him. The two of them then carried their trays to open table and started eating. Bon appetit. The girl held her rice and meat bowl in her hands and started shoveling mouthful after mouthful of her meat and rice. Seeing her eat her food like a man was quite bizarre sight seeing as how she was as cute as a doll one would find in the west.



“The stuff you eat is always a sight to behold, Seria. It’s amazing how you’re able to put away that calorie rich stuff all the time,” said the boy. Once she heard this, the girl started to pout and stopped moving her chopsticks.

“When it comes to food, you are the last person I want to hear that from, Nii-sama. Just what is with that bundle of sugar you are eating?” she said lisping causing the boy, Asagami Iuli, to frown at her.

“I use my head for a living so this much sugar is just the right amount.”

“You eat nothing but sweet things day in and day out. You are going to get diabetes, you know.”

“Shut up. Don’t talk about that while I’m eating.”

“I will admit that parfaits are sweet and delicious but doesn’t the idea of your eating that ridiculous about all by yourself make you feel sick at all?”

“Well what about you, Seria? Just where do you put all that food away in that tiny body of yours?”

“I am just the type of person that never gets fat no matter how much I eat.”

“Oh? I see, so you just digest it all and then go to the little girl’s room, huh.”

“Please do not talk of such things while I am eating.” The two of them continued to chat as they continued eating their meals. Seeing him eat a parfait and his little sister a rice and meat bowl made for quite a strange sight and make everyone around them look on in puzzlement. The two siblings didn’t seem to be bothered by it, though.

“This cafeteria has got a great thing going for it. It’s fast, cheap and it tastes great. The dessert selection’s to die for, too. We’ve got to thank master for sending us here.”

“Hi ha hwey, Nii-hama,” said the girl with her cheeks puffed out like a hamster’s.

“Ask me again after you choke that down.”

“... By the way, Nii-sama,” said Seria once again after she swallowed her food.

“It has been two weeks since we started attending here thanks to Master’s connections but are you getting accustomed to the academy? Are you doing well in your studies? Have you been able to make friends?” asked the girl to which she got no reply from her brother.

“Well what’s this, Nii-sama, you have a pained look on your face.”

“No... It’s just that I was thinking about how I should be the one asking you that. You’re my little sister so why are you worrying about me like you’re my guardian or something?”

“It’s because you are so unreliable, Nii-sama.”

“I don’t want to hear that from someone who’s got rice on their cheeks,” said Iuli indignantly and causing Seria to take her hand to her cheek, find the rice, and put it into her mouth.

“I do not know what you are talking about,” replied his sister with a harrumph thinking that her face was now clean even though there was more rice on her other cheek still. Iuli then stuck the thin parfait spoon into his mouth and sunk deeper into his chair.

“Well, I’m doing all right by most standards. I don’t get the classes at all, though.”

“I thought as much,” replied Seria as she then let out a sigh, “At the very core of your being you are just not suited for magic.”

“Well what about you?”

“I am doing quite well. Unlike you, I am good at adapting to situations. Such is why I am able to worry about you as I am now. Like with earlier, was it truly wise to have such an attitude when dealing with an upperclassmen like that?”

“Well... It’s not like I meant anything by it. All I did was be honest and say, ‘nope’ when he asked me ‘do you have any idea who I am?’ when I accidentally bumped into his shoulder.”

“That boy was an upperclassman by the name of Sagai Seigen. He is currently ranked 2nd out of the entire academy and is apparently a very adept mage,” said Seria as she was looking at her cellphone. She was looking at the academy’s ranking list. On it she is able to find out who the top ranking students, what they look like as well as other sorts of information.

“Oh? Is that so? I guess I should have tried sucking up to him more,” said Iuli sarcastically as he scooped up a brownie and put it into his mouth, “but Seria, since that guy’s 2nd does that mean that there’s someone even stronger than him?”

“Yes, currently the one who is in 1st is, if you can believe it, is a girl who’s in her first year of high school just like you are. Her name is-“

“I found you!” said a voice from the sidelines that took the siblings by surprise. There standing before them was the talented girl who held the rank of 1st in the academy, Kudoin Yukiha. Iuli then looked at the girl that called out to him, looking rather stupid as he stared at her with the spoon still in his mouth.

If 8 out of 10 people would call her “pretty” then the remaining 2 would call her “cute”. Whatever the case, she was a truly beautiful girl. Though she still seemed child-like in some respects her face was nevertheless beautiful and dignified. “I have found you... Huhu. So it is true that you are a student at this academy. I thought I had not seen your face before but I never would have thought that you were a transfer student of all things.” The girl went on to say that she wasn’t going to let him escape while showing a look of anger and joy in her eyes as she glared at him.

“Nii-sama, do you know this person?” said his younger sister as she stared at him blankly. Iuli then once again looked at the girl once more. He looked at her hair that was tied up in the back, her swelling bust, long legs and knee high socks... As he continued to stare at her the gears in his head started to turn and”

“Aaah!”

“It took you long enough, do you remember me now?”

“You’re that girl who showed her panties off!”

“I-I did no such thing!” retorted the girl as her face turned a bright red and started to scowl at him.

“Hahaa, sorry, sorry... It’s just that your panties left a pretty big impression on me,” replied Iuli, meaning it as a joke.

“Wha... Wh-Why you, you truly are a pervert, aren’t you?!” Obviously not getting the joke, the girl became enraged to such an extent that steam started shooting out of her head.

“Ummm... Huh? Did you ever tell me your name?”

“Aah... Now that I think of it I never did tell you, did I? My name is Kudoin Yukiha and I am in my first year of high school.”

“Yukiha, huh, that’s a pretty name.”

“Yo-You are using my first name just like that?!” asked Yukiha, clearly flustered by this whole turn of events.

“Hm? Isn’t that only normal? It’s the name your parents gave you so I’ve got to be sure to use it a whole lot, right?” answered Asagami Iuli who made it a point to call other people by their first names.

“If you really don’t want me to I won’t call you by your first name, if you like,” Iuli added.

“No... It is fine, you can call me Yukiha.”

“I’m Asagami Iuli. I’m high school freshman just like you. You can just call me Iuli.”

“Asagami Iuli... I am sorry to ask you this but do you think you could stick your hand out?” said Yukiha as she extended her own hand out. Iuli thought that she wanted to exchange a friendly handshake with him and so he stuck his right hand

out but once he did that Yukiha then grabbed his wrist so hard that it almost seemed like she was going to twist his arm right out of his socket.

“There truly is not one burn mark on your hand even though you deflected that dragon’s flame magic with nothing but your bare hands. What’s more, you neither have an artifact... nor a tattoo... So just how were you able to perform such a feat?” Yukiha asked as she stared straight at him. It then became apparent that her goal wasn’t so much to shake his hand but to look at it instead. She was probably wondering if there was some kind of trick to his hand and it was here that Iuli broke out into a kind of bitter smile. The reason being was because his right arm- no, his entire body had nothing done to it to begin with.

“Why is this girl who came out of nowhere holding your hand so affectionately, Nii-sama?” asked a stern looking Seria from across the table as she was holding her rice and meat bowl.

“Eh? Wha-?! Yo-You’re wrong! I am doing no such thing! I just-,” retorted Yukiha as she desperately tried to explain herself but it became apparent that Seria wasn’t the only one who was watching this.

“Oi, isn’t that Kudoin over there?”

“Oh, she already came back from her mission?”

“Oi, wait a second, is Kudoin holding hands with someone?”

“No way, the girl with the highest rank in the school and the title of ‘Persephone’ is holding hands with a boy?! Oh wow, isn’t this like big news?!”

“Speaking of which, weren’t they just talking about ‘Persephone’s’ panties? Oh man, have they actually gotten that far already?”

“Who is that guy? I’ve never seen him before.” Before she realized it, she and Iuli were the center of attention for the entire dining hall. Now that she finally realized it, Yukiha started to panic.

“Oh honestly, Ju-Just come with me! There are too many prying eyes here!” said the flustered Yukiha as she grabbed his hand again and dragged him out of the dining hall.

“N-Nii-sama is being taken captive. I must go after them... Ah, but there is still meat left. Ah but Nii-sama... Aah but the meat.” Such was the sight Iuli saw as he was being dragged off somewhere. His little sister was struggling between going after him or to finish her rice and meat bowl.

“Oi, oi, what am I going to do? I walked out with this parfait and spoon. Am I going to be okay? The lunch lady isn’t going to get mad at me, will she?”

“Just how long do you do you intend to keep eating that thing?!” said the girl as they were now at the back of some stairs where not too many people pass by. Seeing Iuli continuing to eat the parfait he got from the dining hall, Yukiha could not help but comment on it.

“You could have just left that in the dining hall, couldn’t you?!”

“What’s that? Yukiha, you don’t get it, do you? Just what do you think will happen if I leave this out during season like this? That’s right, the whipped cream would melt and if that happens the cornflakes underneath it will lose it crispiness-“

“I couldn’t care less!” yelled Yukiha to which Iuli responded with, “What do you mean by that?” Grumbling as he continued eating his parfait.

“Oooh, for crying out loud, Could you stop eating that and listen to what I have to say?!”

“Shut up. Quit making such a big stink about it. Here, I’ll let you try a little bit,” answered Iuli as he stuck the spoon with some whip cream on it into her mouth.

“It’s delicious- Not that!” replied Yukiha as she tried to get him to listen to what she had to say and stop eating the parfait but she then stopped and stiffened up. Her face then became flushed and she then went to say in a small voice, “Ho-Hold on... Was that not an in-in-indirect kiss just now?”

“What’s with you? Aah! I’m just going to say this now but I won’t be giving you anymore! I said a little bit and that’s all!”

“Well I did not ask you to!” said Yukiha, raising her voice and then hitting the wall with all her strength. After taking some deep breaths and Yukiha calmed down she looked straight at Iuli and asked him this:

“Asagami Iuli, just what are you?” The look in her eyes was serious. Iuli then stopped eating and let out a big sigh.

“I don’t really know what to say when you ask me that... I’m just me. Nothing more, nothing less... I’m just like I said earlier, freshmen in the high school section of Seishun Academy just like you are.”

“Don’t try to deny it. There should not be any way for a single student to defeat a dragon with a single punch... No, it would probably be impossible for even a member of the Knight Squad to do... And what’s more, you are not equipped with any sort of Artifact,” said Yukiha to which Iuli didn’t have anything to say.

“Was that some sort of magic?” she inquired.

“No, that wasn’t magic. I told you didn’t I? I’m not that good with magic.”

“Then how were you able to do that?”

“Isn’t it obvious?” replied Iuli as he made his right hand into a fist and stuck it out in front of her. “I used nothing but my own brute strength to hit it.”

“You must be joking! I am being serious when I ask you how you did it!” yelled Yukiha as a look of anger showed in her eyes and Iuli found himself in a bind. Thinking well true “It’s not a lie, though.”

It was true, he really only used his own brute strength when he delivered that punch. Where not even a group of high ranking mages could hope to defeat it with all the magic they could must he was able to defeat it with a single punch. Ever since the fight on “that day” that was the sort of existence that Iuli had become.

“I’m not joking. I’m just kind of strong that is all.”

“Just kind of strong you say?”

“For starters, I did technically save your life, you know? Now all you’re doing is asking me how I did it and I don’t even get a thank you? Or what, are you going to pull one of those, ‘I don’t remember asking you to save,’ things or something?”

“Oh... Well...” said Yukiha who found herself having trouble speaking but finally said, “Tha-Thank you,” while her head was lowered. After seeing this, Iuli then thought that deep down that she was actually an honest person.

“No problem. It wasn’t a big deal at all,” replied Iuli. After hearing this, Yukiha then changed the conversation.

“That reminds me, what rank are you?”

“Rank?”

“I mean to ask what your rank as a mage you are. If you are to become a part of the Knight Squad then they should have given you some sort of ranking.”

“Oh, right, I think I heard them say something about that, huh. Let’s see... Here.” Iuli then handed Yukiha his student identification card from his breast pocket all the while trying to remember all that they told him when he first transferred in but it was all a blur.

“What?!” replied Yukiha as her eyes widened. Shocked at what she had found on his student identification card.

“D-D-Rank?!”

“Looks that way,” replied Iuli as he looked at his school I.D. once again. His card had his picture, name, what class he was in as well “D-Rank” printed on it. After taking the academy’s entrance exam, attended classroom lectures, showed off his skills, had interviews and all sorts of different tests the rank that Asagami Iuli was given... Was D.

“I’m kind of vague on this whole ranking thing so what is D-Rank? Is it amazing or something?”

“It isn’t. D-Rank is the lowest rank there is. Those who are able to use a little mana are temporarily assigned the rank of D but I do not think there is anyone in the high school section with a rank like this.”

“Oooh. So I’m the only one, huh? Haha, I’m pretty cool, huh,” said Iuli as he gave a carefree smile. Meanwhile, Yukiha had brought her hand to her forehead utterly baffled by the whole situation.

“Just wait a moment... I am starting to really confused. Just what are you? Are you amazing or not?”

“I’m me,” answered Iuli as he ate the last spoonful of his parfait, “All right, I’m done filling myself up, I guess I’ll go now?” continued Iuli as he was leaving but was stopped in his trunks by Yukiha.

“Wa-Wait, where are you going?” she inquired.

“What do you mean? To take make-up tests,” answered Iuli to which Yukiha’s eyes widened once again.

Located underneath Seishun Academy is the 1st Training Area. It consisted of a large round room with dirt paved over its floors. The ceiling was also quite high so there was virtually no sense of claustrophobia whatsoever.

“It really is big, huh. This place.”

“Asagami, this will make the third time you have taken this make-up test, but-“ his instructor went on who he then casually ignored what she had to say and instead focused on her herself. She was a tall, slender woman who had a beautiful face as well as piercing eyes. She was dressed in a kind of military suit and had a wild air about her. Her name was Mishima Momo and she was both an instructor at the academy as well as an A-Rank mage affiliated with the Knight Squad.

“Don’t you feel ashamed of yourself at all?” she then asked him with a look of anger in her eyes which she could not suppress. Were it someone weak, then her gaze would have been enough to render that person unconscious however Iuli gave a relaxed grin and this carefree answer:

“Well, how do I say it... I have this policy about loving my weak self and accepting it.”

“I have never encountered a student as bad as you before,” replied Momo, sighing, shocked she has to deal with such a student. When Iuli transferred to the academy it was her class that he was assigned to. As a result, it was inevitable that she was tasked with giving him make-up tests.

“With a problem child like I cannot help but feel that training you will be a waste of time,” she went on.

“No way... Please don’t give up on me, Momo-chan-sensei,” replied Iuli who then saw a vein appear on his instructor’s head the very instant he said that.

“How many times do I have to tell you to call me Instructor Mishima?!” retorted Momo in a low scary voice as she produced a ring from her bosom. It was a medium used to perform magic; a magic implement. This tool was an extremely important yet simple element that allowed for people to use magic. It was an implement used to help those venture into the realms of magic. Such is why they are called magic implements.

Momo then put the ring on the index finger of her right hand and began focusing her mana. As she was doing this, the ground surrounding her began to bulge. Bits and pieces of earth also began to rise and it began forming into a kind of human doll. In just one or two seconds later, the dirt was made into the form of a solider with full body armor on.

“The requirements for passing this test are the same as before: If you are able to land a single hit on me then you rank will be raised to that of C-Rank,” she explained in a resolute tone as she made nine more claymen who followed her every command. On the other hand, Iuli just lightly shrugged her shoulders as he asserted without a hint of doubt in his voice:

“Momo-chan-sensei, I’ve told you many times before, haven’t I? I can’t hit you.”

From the corner of the training area, Yukiha was watching Iuli’s make-up test with doubt in her eyes.

“H-He’s weak. He’s far too weak,” she thought to herself as he watched him struggling with Mishima Momo’s make-up test. He used neither barrier magic nor detection magic. What’s more, he had no intention of attacking her, either. All he did was clumsily dodge her attacks over and over again. One might even say that he was just running around.

“As it stands... He truly will be a D-Rank mage,” she thought to herself. In the Gouma Knight Squad, as well as its lower organizations that are affiliated with it, the ranks range from D-Rank to S-Rank. The only ones accepted into the Knight

Squad are those of A-Rank or higher. As far as S-Rank mages are concerned there are only a handful of them within the Knight Squad. As a mage it is proof that they are the “greatest” and those who have been recognized as a S-Rank mage will forever have their names carved in history. While on the other hand having D-Rank, the absolute lowest rank, means that you cannot even do the most basic things mages can do and are in other words apprentices. Everyone who first joins the training institute all start out with a D-Rank but almost all of them will advance to C-Rank as long as no one drops out.

“Just how were you able to beat that dragon with a single punch?”

“I knew it, so you know about Nii-sama’s ‘power’ don’t you?” Without even realizing it Yukiha had spoken her question out loud which then caused a young girl’s voice to call out to her. Turning around, Yukiha found herself staring at a girl with blonde hair. The very same middle school girl who was eating that massive bowl of rice and meat with him earlier.

“It’s a nice to meet you, my name is Asagami Seria.”

“I-It’s nice to meet you as well,” replied Yukiha albeit slightly awkwardly as she was taken aback by this whole encounter.

“You referred to him as ‘Nii-sama,’ does that mean then... That you are Asagai Iuli’s...”

“Yes, I am Nii-sama’s little sister.”

“So you are that boy’s little sister, hm.”

“You are Kudoin Yukiha, correct? You are the one who holds the highest rank of 1st in this academy. Your beauty as well as your brilliant techniques have also garnered you the second name of ‘Persephone’ as well. It is an honor to meet you,” continued Seria. What with her knowing full well who Yukiha was she knew that she had to be polite to her.

“She is completely different from that brother of hers who lacks any sort of manners,” thought Yukiha, “This little sister of his certainly knows how to behave.”

“So, Seria-san.”

“Feel free to call me Seria.”

“Very well... So Seria just what is his ‘power’? Do you know what it is? Just... What is he?” Seria then crossed her arms and began to think for the next few seconds about whether to tell Yukiha or not. In the end, she let out a big sigh and finally resigned herself to telling her.

“Let’s see... Seeing as how you have already come to know about Nii-sama’s power there is no point in trying to hide it now. Not to mention the fact Nii-sama did not really try to hide it to begin with...” Seria continued on. As if almost trying to convince herself to tell Yukiha the truth and finally started to do so.

“Due to various circumstances... Nii-sama and I ended up becoming disciples of a certain man. He was very skilled as a mage but due to his problematic personality he seems to have never been a part of the Knight Squad or any of its smaller organizations.”

“By ‘problematic,’ what do you mean?”

“He loved drinking, gambling and women,” answered Seria to which Yukiha thought that such a man would be problematic.

“Then I suppose that means that you siblings did not transfer here from any training institute, did you?”

“Yes, that is correct,” answered Seria. Other than Seishun Academy, there are many training institutes that are under the Gouma Knight Squad’s jurisdiction. Most all who have the potential for using mana are taken in by the Gouma Knight Squad and learn spells to help them live as mages. There are also cases where a mage is born into a normal civilian family, like Yukiha was, where then that family name becomes renowned for having a line of mages in its bloodline.

“You two did very well slipping into this academy as you did. I have heard that when a mage’s mana first starts manifesting in their early teen years that the Knight Squad would be sure to find that mage and throw him or her into a training institute.”

“It would seem that master did something about that. He used some kind of concealing magic on us.” Yukiha was then convinced of Seria’s story. There were many kinds of concealment magic, after all.

“So in the end... Well, many things happened: we trained for many years under master and then one day we found ourselves fighting very strong and very evil magic races.”

“It sounds like it was quite rough.”

“These magic races were unbelievably strong. Both Nii-sama, myself and of course master had an extremely difficult time dealing with them. To top it off, being the underhanded fiends that they were, they even went as far as taking me hostage.”

“Oh, that certainly is underhanded.”

“It was my fault that Nii-sama and master were beaten within an inch of their lives. They were dangerously close to being killed as well,” continued Seria whose face turned grim as she remembered that incident.

“But wait a minute! A miracle occurred!” Seria went on. Going from a dark looking expression to one where her eyes sparkled as brilliantly as the sun. She had also raised her voice all of a sudden so Yukiha was both surprised as well as a little unsettled.

“Nii-sama ‘awakened’ using the power of his feelings he had for his little sister!”

“A-Awakened?” Though Yukiha was taken aback that did not stop Seria as her nostrils flared as she used her whole body to tell the story of her brother and what he did that day.

“Once Nii-sama’s transcendental super power had awakened he punched, kicked and slammed all his enemies and saved me.” A short silence transpired between the two as Yukiha was eager to hear what happened next.

“That is all,” added Seria simply.

“That’s it?!” replied Yukiha, unable to hold herself from commenting on the abrupt ending to Seria’s story.

“Ju-Just wait a minute... There are still things I do not understand. Ju-Just what do you mean by he’s awakened?”

“I meant exactly what I said; he awakened. You know, they have that happen a lot in manga’s and the like, don’t they? When the characters are in a perilous situation where all seems lost and just as it looks like the hero’s friends are in danger a dormant power awakens inside him.”

“Ye-Yes, well, I am certainly aware of such turns of events in stories like that.”

“That was sort of how Nii-sama became stronger. Well, I had an inkling he had gotten too strong to be honest... So much so that he would usually win from just the air pressure he produced by from one of his punches.”

“Just the air pressure... you mean...”

“It seems as though something unique had changed the very nature of his mana but not even I know exactly how. We thought it was something temporary but he has been strong like that ever since.” Hearing this, Yukiha could not help but feel troubled. It did not seem that Seria was lying to her. What’s more she appeared to be dead serious about what she was talking about as well.

“So does that mean that she was telling me the truth this whole time?” she pondered. The story itself wasn’t all that persuasive but she felt that Iuli’s very strength might not fall in either the realm of persuasion or understanding.

“But... If that is so then why is he being treated like a D-Rank mage?” Yukiha could not help but ask. Being able to defeat a magic being, in this case a dragon, in a single attack in itself would have warranted him an A-Rank. No, it would not be strange if he had been recognized as an S-Rank mage for such a feat... And yet...

“Haa... That is something that is bothering me as well,” answered Seria as she took a very deep sigh. “When Nii-sama and I transferred here we were asked the question ‘how well are you at using magic?’ to which we both answered honestly. As such, Nii-sama said, ‘I can’t but I was able to beat a magic being,’ however-”

“They did not believe him, did they?”

“Exactly,” answered Seria, dejected. It’s no wonder, thought Yukiha. The only reason that Yukiha was able to believe in Iuli’s power was because she had seen it with her own eyes. Otherwise no one would believe such a statement as “I can’t but I was able to beat a magic being.” It would be the same as saying, “I can’t do multiplication but I can do prime factors.” Hearing something like this would surely make the other person think he was just acting stupid and playing up his abilities.

“Before he had become so strong, Nii-sama was the type who was able to make full use of his magic in combat. Now it goes without saying that his grades on the admission test were naturally the worst. I even heard that his grades were the worst the academy has ever seen in its entire history. Such is why Nii-sama has the lowest rank of D. I am just happy that they did not reject his enrollment.”

“I see. So that is why he is taking a make-up test to go up to C-Rank.” Unlike an S-Rank or A-Rank test, a C-Rank test is considerably easier to pass and the criteria in which to pass it are surprisingly vague. If any of the faculty who are A-Rank or higher determine that someone has potential then that mage would be able to rise to C-Rank. In essence, all Iuli would have to do to rise to C-Rank would be to show his opponent, Mishima Momo, his power. However, as far as Yukiha could tell, if he were to do that here the results would be nothing short of catastrophic.

“Of all the people he had to have as his instructor he had to have Mishima. Among all the instructors here she is the most difficult to deal with. He really ran out of luck when he got her.”

“I couldn’t have said it better myself,” replied Seria, nodding her head in agreement.

“If only his instructor was not a woman he would have already become C-Rank or higher by now.” This, however, was not the reason that Yukiha had for why Mishima Momo was a bad match for him.

“What do you mean?” Yukiha inquired.

“Nii-sama does not hit women,” answered Seria succinctly as she told the simple truth about her brother. It was at this moment that they then heard someone say, “that’s enough!” with a voice so full of spirit that it reverberated throughout the training area. Yukiha then changed her gaze back to the training area and the sight of the two of them on it. With a wave of Momo’s hand all of the claymen went back to the earth. The only thing left standing was Iuli who was covered in dust and dirt.

“Our time is up, Asagami.”

“Huh? It’s over? So, how did I do?”

“I commend you for asking me such a question so shamelessly considering your performance just now.”

“Then... Does that mean I passed?”

“You failed you fool!”

“Ah man, seriously? Then, does that mean that... I have another makeup test next week?”

“Naturally, I do not allow any D-Rank students into my class.”

“Huh? I don’t want to... I really don’t want to... Three times is enough for me... My clothes are all dirty, there’s dirt in my mouth and I won’t have any free time after school.”

“Then that just means that you will have to hurry and land a hit on me already.”

“I can’t do that,” replied Iuli, stopping just short of making his excuse sound pathetic but in a clear voice. Hearing this, Momo could not help but intently stare at the boy and his dirty clothes.

“I would rather die then hit a woman,” continued Iuli, saying these words without any sign of wavering or hesitation in his eyes. Showing just how serious he was. Seeing the brazen expression on the boy’s face, Momo could not help but feel at a complete and utter loss to which she then let out a sigh.

“It’s fine if you believe in feminism but first you must focus on harnessing your power. The only ones who are able to make it on the battlefield are those with power.”

All right!

“You may return home for today. I have a full schedule so I will be off to give other students their makeup tests as well.” Once he was permitted to go home, Iuli screamed for joy, saying “YES!” as he ran out of the training room. Seeing his behavior, Momo could not help but feel rubbed the wrong way but began to conduct the next makeup test regardless. After seeing this, a fierce expression appeared on Yukiha’s face.

“As I thought... It looks like Instructor Mishima has not realized it yet. That Asagami Iuli is far stronger than that,” she thought. When it came to power to make it through on the battlefield, Iuli had more than enough. Of course, she had no reason to believe everything that Seria had told her. Yukiha herself was still skeptical of the whole thing. However, the sight of him on that day was still burned right into her memory. Asagami Iuli, looking cool as some kind superhero as he saved her at the time.

“No,” she thought, “Tha-That’s not it... Just what is cool about that man?! He is nothing but a pervert!”

“If you do not mind, I would like to get through,” said a voice behind Yukiha as she was trying to come to grips about how she felt about Iuli. Yukiha then realized that she was in the entranceway and then frantically made way for her.

“Thank you very much,” said the girl indifferently as she walked past Yukiha and Seria. She was a girl who had lightly colored hair that reached down to her shoulders. Her eyes were large and her face seemingly innocent looking in some respects. For anyone that saw her they would probably say she looked like a cold doll.

“If I recall correctly, she is from Instructor Mishima’s class... I believe her name is Tsuji Yashiro,” thought Yukiha as she was staring after the girl’s back while searching her memories for any information about her. However, all she could remember was her name. As they were both freshmen she made a point of looking for a chance to talk with her but never could find one. Among the other students there was talk that her grades and performance had not improved at all and that she was not expected to take part in this year’s ranking matches.

“Oh, could it be that you’re the one who has the next makeup test with Momo-chan-sensei?” asked Iuli as he was passing by Yashiro in the entrance way as he was covered in dirt.

“My name is not ‘you,’” said Yashiro in a cold tone, apparently wishing to correct him, “my name is Yashiro. Tsuji Yashiro.”

“Hmmm, so your name’s Yashiro. My name’s Asagami Iuli.”

“Iuli... I know of you. You are that transfer student, aren’t you?”



“Yeah. So, are you taking the makeup test, too?”

“That’s right.”

“What a coincidence, I am too. I totally bombed, though.”

“It would seem so.”

“If you’re taking a makeup test, did you get bad grades like I did?”

“It would seem so.”

“Hahaa, I see, I see... Well, let’s both do our best.”

“I will,” answered Yashiro. Such was how the polite talk between the two ended and Yashiro headed down to Momo. Iulli then made his way to Yukiha and Seria.

“Yo, thanks for waiting, Seria.”

“Welcome back, Nii-sama. Today I see you’re in as miserable a state as ever.”

“You’re really harsh, my little sis. Wait, huh? What are you doing here, Yukiha?” replied Iulli whose eyes shot right open as he saw Yukiha.

“I am sure you have not forgotten, but... Our conversation is not over yet.”

“It isn’t?”

“Iuli, your sister told me the reason why you have become so strong. Well, I am beginning to understand the reason for it if not only a little, anyway... But it truly is only a little.”

“I see,” said Iuli, acting as if he could not care less. Even if his little sister was telling her the story right in front of him, he would not have tried to silence her.

“I’m really not trying to hide my power but I don’t plan on showing it off, either.” After hearing this, Yukiha thought for a while and then let out a sigh.

“For now, let me just tell you this: as far as the dragon you killed is concerned I told the Knight Squad that it was already on the verge of death when it manifested in the human world. Admittedly, I tried to tell them about you, but... Sadly they did not believe me.”

“Hahaha, well, I’m sure no one would believe you right off the bat.”

“This is no laughing matter. Just what are you going to do? If you were thinking of telling them the truth I thought I would go with you and help verify your story.”

“No, it’s all right, it would be pain anyway. What happened last time was just a little extra exercise to my walk. I was just walking around and I just so happened to find you and that dragon.”

“A walk, you say? You were taking a walk in such a remote region?” The woodland area where Yukiha was fighting the dragon was quite far from the academy. Yukiha had prepared a magic teleportation device so as to move through it because it was so vast that one would have to take countless transfers by train just to do so normally.

“Yeah,” said Iuli as he pointed to his uniform, “I heard that this has some kind of spell on it that makes it so no normal person can see us so I thought I would run all over the place and try it out.” The magic embedded in Seishun Academy’s uniforms was a simple recognition inhibition spell. This was done so no ordinary person could see their students perform “feats beyond any person’s means.” Simply put, such magic will be necessary to ward people off when a clash of enormous scale broke out.

“I see, so to you that place are nothing more than a place to walk,” replied Yukiha, finding herself laughing before she even realized it. For those born with mana, one is considered to have physical abilities beyond any normal person however the boy standing before her looked to have physical abilities even beyond that.

“Oh yeah, one thing... Don’t go around telling people I killed that thing,” said Iuli as though he just remembered to mention it.

“What do you mean?” asked Yukiha, looking puzzled, “you were the one who killed that black dragon, weren’t you?”

“I didn’t. That dragon was practically dead to begin with.”

“Practically dead to begin with,”

“The bodies of dragons may be proportionate to their age but it wouldn’t be surprising for a dragon that size to understand people. That and a black dragon wouldn’t use flame magic. That’s what red dragons are known to use. And to top it off its movements were dulled down. It was almost like it was moving under some kind of orders.”

“Wa-Wait just a moment,” said Yukiha in a panic, “are you saying that dragon was under someone’s control?”

“Probably,”

“Impossible. Among all the magic races dragons is one of the strongest. If there was something that could control something like that...”

“Yeah,” replied Iuli. The coloring on Yukiha’s face then took a turn for the worse as she figured out what could do such a thing. While in contrast, Iuli casually said, “Don’t you think a ‘Witch’ could have done something like that?”

Chapter 2 – An Unchanging World

In the end, one could say that this was a common occurrence.

“You really are no good, are you, my damned disciple,” said the man in a harsh boring tone. Sitting on a stump and shaking the cigarette in his mouth as he spoke. One could probably say that he was about 35. He wore a jet black cloak and had long unkempt hair. His gaze was also exceedingly sharp and he had a stubbly beard on his chin. The man’s name was Julius Howlgate. He was a mage who was not affiliated with any organization. Though he may find himself passing out and falling to the ground he was the kind of many who wouldn’t do anything about it.

“You have no talent; you’re stupid and even when I tell you ten things you only learn one of them. Tell me why it is that your little sister’s getting along better and faster watching from the side while you’re here struggling? Huh?” The boy didn’t say anything. No, it would be more accurate to say that he couldn’t say anything.

The reason being was because the boy had just been struck by the man's lightning and was so hurt that he could not even stand.

"O-ho, you've got some nerve to be ignoring me, Master." The man's only reply then was the snapping of his fingers. On his hand one could see a ring which was his magic implement that then reacted to his snapping fingers. From the ring then came a field of crackling lightning that then struck the boy while he was still lying on his back.

"Hhngyaaaaa!"

"Haahaahaa! Well what do you know! You've still got energy to get up after all!"

"What're you doing, you old bastard!" Yelled the boy as smoke was rising from his head. The man, however, was not afraid of him and just simply let out a puff of white smoke from his cigarette.

"Here I am, a gifted mage, going out of my way to guide you in the ways of magic and yet you're just so awful I could cry... Aah-aah, I shouldn't have made you my disciple on a whim. You may have both been attacked by magic beings but I should've just gone and saved your little sister instead."

"Don't you mean that you suck at teaching? For starters, am I seriously going to get stronger by learning martial arts... and magic?"

"It's not like I've got a choice what with you're not having any talent and all." Upon hearing these brutally honest words from his master, the boy could not help but bite down on his lip in frustration. One's affinity for magic varies from person to person. If there are those whose specialty is flame magic then there are those whose specialty is ice and snow magic. Once a mage learns what kind of magic he or she can learn it is then up to them to cultivate it and make it their own through training. However, for some reason or other, the boy didn't have affinity for any kind of magic. A normal person would be able to sense what sort of magic he had and be able to use it once they were told how to do so. However if one does not know what their affinity was then no matter how many times it is explained to them or how hard they try their mana will always be at odds with the magic they are trying to perform. At this point in time, the man felt as if he was repeatedly trying to teach an octopus how to move like a centipede.

“I’ve heard the whole story about geniuses making for lousy teachers and it looks like it is true. I’m a genius so I’ve got no idea why you can’t just do it like I can,” said Julius as he let some of his narcissism slip in all the while looking at the boy’s face. “Hey, how does it feel to not get better no matter how many times you try? Just how frustrating is it knowing that all your hard work won’t be rewarded? Is being born talentless like you any fun? Come on, why don’t you tell your dear old master, my damned disciple?” After being told something so spiteful and full of scorn the boy then clenched his fist. He was just so utterly frustrated he could not help himself.

“Oh, are you going to cry? Are you? Haha, Then go ahead! I won’t forgive anyone who makes a woman cry but I just love seeing shitty brats like you cry!”

“You fucking bastard!” Surpassing the very limits of his anger, the boy then concentrated all of his mana into his fist and beared it down on Julius. The only thing the boy could do was focus everything into one attack. However, Julius was able to stop that attack without even moving from the stump.

“You’ve still got a long ways to go, huh,” said his master as he then hit the boy with everything he had into the air. After falling from such a height and onto his back the boy was then left breathless for a short while.

“Let’s see, Seria’s probably done with the grub by now,” said Julius as he stood up from the stump, “Oi, damned disciple, once we eat you and I are gonna have another death match. If you’re able to match up to me then even if you can’t use magic you’ll be able to get by pretty well.”

“Hey, Master,” the boy called out as he was walking away, still lying on the ground. His breathing still disturbed from the damage that was inflicted upon him when he fell.

“What is Strength?”

“Huh?”

“What is it like to be strong? If I get as strong as you will everything around me change?”

“Ha, what a stupid question,” The boy had spoken the very feelings he kept at the bottom of his heart and yet Julius just laughed at it.

“What’s the point of being told by somebody else? If you want to know so badly then get stronger if your that curious.

It was here that Iuli’s eyes bolted right open. The first thing he saw was a white ceiling. While waiting for his upper body to wake up as he was lying in his thin futon Iuli then looked around to see where he was, He was in room that was about 9 feet long and 12 feet wide. The room also had a desk as well as a refrigerator. What’s more, the bed he was sleeping on came with the room.

“Oh right, I’m living at a dorm now.” Iuli was in room 434 on the fourth floor of the boy’s dorm. As Seishun Academy was a boarding school, Iuli was given his own room when he transferred in. Even though he had been living in that single room for two weeks now he just couldn’t get used to his new surroundings.

“Hmmm, I wonder if it’s because Seria isn’t here. We did use to always sleep together and all,” thought Iuli. While thinking of his cuddly little sister and her lovely sleeping face, Iuli then looked to the clock on his wall to see what time it was. It was 10 o’clock in the morning. If it was a weekday he would have been late for his classes but today was Sunday which was the academy’s day off.

“I really slept for a long time, huh.” It was probably for this very reason that he had such a nostalgic dream. Julius Howlgate, a man who was as much a gifted mage as he was an egotist. Not to mention an exceedingly strong feminist. His personality was bad. So bad he thought he would die but nevertheless Iuli was grateful to him. Regardless of what might have happened, in Iuli’s mind, he was a good master who took care of him and Seria. It was thanks to his training him and never holding back in calling him “awful” or “talentless” over and over again that Iuli was able to become a pretty decent mage when it came to fighting. Granted, that pretty decent power of his, suddenly transformed into something “unorthodox,” though.

“I wonder what Master is up to now,” muttered Iuli as he looked out his window. Julius had suddenly disappeared long before the two of them had even gone to Seishun Academy. All that was left when they woke up was a letter that read, “go here if you’re ever strapped for food,” a map of Seishun Academy as well as a letter of recommendation. For a time, the two of them lived on their own but that soon

became more difficult so they finally decided to do what their master asked and came to Seishun Academy two weeks earlier.

What with Seishun Academy being an organization under the direct control of the Japanese government, all students were freed from paying any tuition as well as live in dorms supplied by the academy. If any students made a request, they could even get money for food expenses as well. So in essence, if one was to become a part of Seishun Academy they would never have any trouble finding food to eat or a place to sleep. For the sake of the world and the people living in it the country had apparently gone to great lengths to make an academy to cultivate mages who secretly fight magic beings. Iuli then inadvertently found himself looking at his fist, wondering if he had become strong.

He was now able to beat most anybody using just a tenth of his strength. That being said, just using a tenth of his strength would still be enough to cause a crack in the earth as well as split the air. In the end his body became engraved with a power that would allow him one day hit his master, the master he admired so much, without fail.

“It didn’t change, huh, Master,” grumbled Iuli as he suddenly felt like mocking himself, “Even after becoming this strong everything around me is the same as it was before.”

“You’re late,” said a beautiful girl as Iuli left his room after changing into a plain t-shirt he bought cheaply at the store and some long shorts. The girl was Kudoin Yukiha and even though it was a day off she still wore her uniform and with him being in such a random outfit as he was the contrast between them couldn’t have been any worse.

“Hmmm?” replied Iuli as he was desperately trying to work his brain even though he was still half-asleep and then said this:

“Change”

“What?” responded Yukiha to the always serious and regal Yukiha she was not able to get Iuli’s reference. Explaining it would be a real pain so let us just move on with the story.

“What do you mean I’m late? Did you and I make plans or something?”

“We didn’t. I am just here waiting for you of my own accord.”

“Then you’ve got no right to say that I’m late, huh.”

“If you are late then you are late. Even if it is a day off there is only so much time that you should spend it sleeping in bed. Especially with many of students here spending their day off training and what have you.” All of the training fields and departments where they could practice their magic were all open to them even on their days off. In addition the academy was so pleasant a place that many instructors and clerks are even willing to help their students on their days off as well.

“Or are you going to tell me,” Yukiha said with a sarcastic grin on her face, “that you do not need such a thing as training? What an envious life you must live.”

“If it’s training I do that, too. It’s just that sleeping when you want to sleep and eating when I want to eat is a kind of policy of my Master’s. He said something about if I lived by the rules and lived properly that I wouldn’t be able to handle the senseless irrationality of the battlefield.”

“There is some truth in what he says but it’s still quite reckless.”

“Yeah, that was the kind of master he was,” replied Iuli with a bitter smile.

“So, what did you want with me this early in the morning?” Upon hearing this Yukiha then straightened herself out and then answered him in her natural way.

“Asagami Iuli, you and I will now go and investigate the woodland area where that dragon appeared.”

“I’m just going to say no.”

“Wa-Wait! Where do you think you are going?” asked Yukiha as Iuli then stopped.

“The cafeteria, I’m starving.”

“I see, so you are off to brunch.”

“Bra and tits?”

“I said brunch, you fool!” retorted Yukiha as her face turned a bright red.

“Brunch, you see, is where you go and eat at a careless time like you are now. In essence, it is a meal that serves as both your breakfast and lunch,” she then went on to explain.

“Ah, I see. Well there you have it. I’m off to have brunch.”

“Then once you have finished is fine. I would like you to accompany me.”

“Well it’s just that, you see, once I’m done eating... You know... I’m going to be busy. I have a lot of things to take care of.”

“What things?” replied Yukiha, looking serious which made Iuli struggle to find an answer. The truth was that he did not have anything to take care of but Iuli was convinced that saying such a thing would not convince her. Thinking for a short while, Iuli then thought of an excuse to give her and then said:

“After I’m done eating I’m going to go to my room to masturbate so don’t bother me.” The instant he said this, however, he felt an intense feeling of shame come over him. Of all the excuses he could have given her this was too much. What’s more, he may have very well been to blunt about it.

“Bu-But, this should do it. She will get all creeped out and walk away,” Iuli thought to himself. Then he was afraid of what she might do to him. He then looked up to see what expression she had.

“Mas-tur-bate?” replied Yukiha with a puzzled look on her face and her head leaning to the side.

“You’re not telling me... That she doesn’t know what masturbating is?!” Thought Iuli as he panicked at this unexpected situation he found himself in. It seemed that the girl known as Kuhouin Yukiha was even more naïve than he thought. All probably brought on by her living the pampered, sheltered life of an heiress for all he knew.

“Masturbate... I have to say that I have never heard that word before. Iuli, just what does ‘masturbate’ mean?”

“Oh my God she’s serious!” screamed Iuli inside his skull. Though Yukiha was utterly fascinated by the new word and wished to learn it’s meaning Iuli was using every fiber of his being to keep himself from telling her what it actually meant.

“What does it mean? Well, uh, yeah... How do I say it, it involves a lot of strokes.”

“Strokes? Is it some sort of training?”

“Aah, well, I guess you could call it training. You deliriously think of... No, I mean imagine yourself in all kinds of situations, turn them into visions and then just kind of drown yourself in that world you made just for yourself.”

“Oh, so it is a kind of image training.” In the end, the one who convinced Yukiha what it meant was Yukiha herself.

“I didn’t lie to her, did I? No, I didn’t,” Iuli thought to himself. Just as he was about to feel relief after getting past this whole situation, Yukiha then said:

“I see, so this activity you call ‘masturbate’ has deep ties to your newfound strength, doesn’t it.” The girl’s ambition for learning and curiosity knew no bounds. Staring at him with such clear eyes Iuli couldn’t help but feel guilt and shame for misleading her as he was.

“Can I masturbate as well?”

“Huh? Ah, yeah... Well you can, but... It’s different for guys and girls.”

“I see... So there is a difference,” stated Yukiha as she then thought for a brief moment and looked straight at Iuli; waiting in anticipation for him to explain the difference.

“Iuli, I would like to try to masturbate with you.” Yukiha was serious. Extremely serious even. Iuli didn’t know what to say to this and just remained silent. After hearing such an outrageous statement, Iuli then buried his face in both of his hands like a shamed maiden. He was so embarrassed he wanted to die.

“So then, Iuli, just how exactly does one matsu-“

“It’s my fault for mentioning it so don’t ever use that word again! You got that?! This conversation’s over!” said Iuli as he snapped back at her. Apologizing while his face was bright red. Though it was true that he brought this on himself, he could not help but feel that he was the one being sexually harassed in the end. Thinking about what would happen once she found out what the word’s true meaning was gave him such a headache that he then decided he would leave it to his future self for when that reality came to be.

“I was lying when I was saying I had things to do. I just thought it would be a pain and I didn’t want to go.”

“A pain, you say,” replied Yukiha. Her eyebrows raised in surprise.

“You were the one who mentioned ‘Witches’ yesterday, weren’t you?”

“That was nothing more than a theory.”

“If there is even the slightest chance of their involvement then as mages we cannot possibly ignore this. If ‘Witches’ start appearing here it will be a disaster and it is our mission to do what we can for humanity as well as the world.”

“Then all you have to do is report that to the knight squad or the academy, right? It’s not like we need to go on this little field trip or anything,” countered Iuli to which Yukiha then cast her eyes down in response.

“It won’t be any use. Right now the Knight Squad is busy with the Black Witch Faction. If we do not give them proof then they probably won’t do anything.”

“The Black Witch Faction...”

“You’re not telling me you have not heard of them before, have you?”

“No, I’ve at least heard of them before.” The Black Witch Faction is a different group of mages from the Gouma Knight Squad. The Gouma Knight Squad is an organization that was secretly approved by the Japanese government and the United Nations. The Black Witch Faction at present has been showing opposition towards them. To put it simply, they are a terrorist group. What first triggered their dissent

was the final decisive battle between Lord Bloody and Witch Dystopia. With the resulting defeat and death of Lord Bloody, the Black Witch Faction then became a religious group worshipping Witch Dystopia, Believing them to be the saviors of the human world.

“Honestly, it truly is comical isn’t it Humans worshipping a magic race like that. Just what good will comes from it Even if they did destroy the vampire that doesn’t make them our allies?”

“But, no one knows where Witch Dystopia is right now, right?” asked Iuli to which Yukiha nodded her head.

“That’s exactly right. After Lord Bloody had perished Witch Dystopia hasn’t shown them since. They have not made any movements in the Demon World and, of course, not in the Human World either. Many people theorize that they perished along with Lord Bloody but there is still too little information to come to any definitive conclusion.”

“So not only have we not met this group of witch worshippers we don’t even know if they’re alive, huh? I just don’t get it.”

“It is probably for those very reasons that they are able to worship Witch Dystopia as they have been. It is like people worshipping an idol.”

“Is that right,” replied Iuli, nodding his head in understanding and not understanding.

“That reminds, they’ve been saying lately that the Black Witch Faction’s been on the move, huh. So what’s the deal? The high and mighty Gouma Knight Squad are too busy fighting humans and can’t spare the time to fight their sworn enemies, the Witches?” stated Iuli, feeling the irony. What was supposed to be a war between humans and Witches has turned into a war between humans and witches as well. What’s more it seemed like it was becoming more and more apparent.

“Whatever the case, I would like you to come with me, Iuli,” asked Yukiha once again, “of course, I not am asking you to do this for free.”

“What? You saying you’ll go on a date with me if I do or something?”

“Yo-You fool! Wh-Who would go on a date with someone like you?!” retorted Yukiha as her face turned scarlet. Of all the things she knew it about it looked as though dating was certainly one of them.

“Ah! I-If you will help me then I will attest to your power. I will ask Instructor Mishima to have you show your power in another way. If you do that then you will be sure to rise to C-Rank... No, even higher, I’m-“

“Nah, I’m good. I wasn’t interested in that in the first place.”

“You truly are a strange one, aren’t you.” Iuli then took a quick glance at Yukiha to find her sighing as though she had given up.

“Oh fine. If you’re up to treating me afterwards I could then I’ll tag along on this investigation of yours.”

“Re-Really?”

“Yeah. But I have a condition.”

“A condition, what is it? Tell me.” Though she responded in a resolute way it was after she said this that she then realized just what his condition might be.

“Yo-You are not suggesting... That the condition be that I go on a da-da-date are you?! It is just that, you see... I do not have experience in such things and do not know what to do... So, u-um...”

“Mont Blanc,” Iuli answered simply while Yukiha was acting all flustered.

“Eh? Mo-Mont Blanc?”

“I want you to tell me a place that has good Mont Blanc. The cafeteria here has all the usual parfaits and cakes but no Mont Blanc.

Covering an impressive area of land, everything about Seishun Academy was made with mages in mind so everything within the school had a purpose. To a normal person, the school buildings, the dorms and research buildings all just look like modern buildings but the longer one looks at them one might be able to see the functional beauty of them. Their configuration as well as materials used to make

them had all been calculated. Though their strategic placement was simple it served to establish a special area where mana could be brought about. So in essence, the academy itself was a gigantic magic circle whose name was “Mystery Circle.” This complicated and sophisticated magic circle allowed for mages to use magic that they were not able to use before. The academy also has an anti-magic barrier that is up at all times and in emergency situations it can also act as a launch pad for long-range magic attacks. Only mages of A-Rank or higher are permitted to use the magic movement apparatus known as “Ship” as well as the academy’s massive magic circle. Such are the benefits those who have attained A-Rank or higher.

“A-Rank or higher? But I’m D-Rank. Is this really okay?”

“Of course it is. As long as you are with an A-Rank mage then it is still possible to use this device.” After Iuli’s lunch, or more brunch in this case, Yukiha then lead Iuli to magic movement apparatus located underground. As the two of them walked down a hallway of perfect white the two of them continued their conversation.

“Oh yeah, you’re an A-Rank mage, huh. You’re really something,” said Iuli as he was just speaking his mind but Yukiha just returned his comment with a frown.

“I cannot not help but feel you don’t mean that. You are stronger than me by leaps and bounds aren’t you?”

“Don’t take it so negatively. I was just being honest. And besides, it’s not like strength is everything,” replied Iuli as he shrugged his shoulders.

“That reminds me, there’s something I wish to ask you.”

“What is it?”

“Why do you make a point of not hitting women?”

“Hmmm, well, it’s just my policy.”

“What I was trying to ask was why you made that your policy.”

“No real reason, isn’t that only normal? It’s the guys who can hit a woman with a smile on their face that’s the real problem.”

“Personally, as a woman, I do not like the whole idea of men dominating women. Women are not so weak an existence that they have to be protected all the time by men.”

“No, that’s not it. That’s not it at all,” replied Iuli, shaking his head, “this isn’t an issue of being strong or weak. There are all kinds of strong women out there, right? If I’m not mistaken, isn’t the captain of the knight squad also a woman? What was her name? Crowley?”

“No, it’s not Crowley. It’s Captain Crowley Himitsu.”

“Right, that’s it. That’s the one. Well, anyway, I’m not saying I’m looking down on women or anything. In fact, if anything, I really respect them. I love women and that’s why I won’t hit them.” Upon hearing Iuli speak so forwardly about something like this she could not help but have utterly amazed look on her face.

“So in essence you are a man who just follows his desires, hm. You sleep when you want to sleep, eat when you want to eat and on top of that you love women. Honestly, what a hopeless man you are.”

“Well they do say that ‘all great men are great lovers, too,’ don’t they? All good guys wanna be like that.”

“Well it’s not so much what you say but how you say, after all.”

“While we’re at it, you’re just way too serious. Your whole body’s got this honor student aura thing going on.”

“I do not have any such aura about me.”

“See! That’s just what I’m talking about! People tell you all the time you just don’t get jokes, right?”

“We-Well it is not like I can help it. That is just how I am,” replied Yukiha in a panicked voice. Iuli’s guess seemed to have been right on the money.”

“But, when you think about it, making someone as serious as you go investigate when it’s not a mission is kind of weird, isn’t it?” said Iuli as he stopped in his

tracks and then taking a good look at Yukiha. He had only just met her but he was starting to understand her. He didn't think that she was some kind of glory seeker who would go out and get it. On the contrary, she was probably the type of girl that would hate people like that.

"We-Well you see..." replied Yukiha, a woeful expression starting to show on her face and so lowered it from Iuli's view. After a few seconds silence, Yukiha then began to talk again:

"I must... enter the Knight Squad as soon as possible. To that end, just doing normal things so as to enter it just isn't enough."

"Oh? Aren't the only ones who can join the Knight Squad those who graduated from a training institute?"

"Normally, yes but there are exceptions. If you are able to impress the Knight Squad by showing off your abilities then they will have you join the Knight Squad without making you wait until you graduate. At present there is one student in the Knight Squad who was able to enter into it in this very same way." Within Yukiha's eyes Iuli could see that they were filled with her strong will and her feelings of frustration over her own powerlessness.

"My-"

"Ah, you don't have to say anymore. I'm sorry I asked you something weird like that," replied Iuli as he stopped her just short of saying something else. Looking pained, Iuli then extended her hand out to her.

"Everyone's got their own circumstances that they have to deal with, you know." When all is said and done one can probably assume that everyone has circumstances they can't talk about or even want to talk about. Their conversation now down, the two of them continued walking on.

Deep within the woods was a single Witch. Even though it was the afternoon there was hardly any sunlight as this was in the deepest part of the woods. However, what the location lacked in sunlight the one advantage it did have was an old cabin. In its heyday it was once used as a shelter as well as a storage room but now it is no longer used by anyone and has been abandoned.

“Oh dear, I knew it, this rundown building is just not suitable for me, is it. Hey, what do you all think?” What then answered the witch’s inquiry was the growling of beasts within the dark confines of the cabin. What’s more it was not just one but in upwards of ten or more that all quietly growled in agreement with her. The wood plank floor was swarming with them. They were four-legged animals that greatly resembled wolves however, unlike any wolf that one has ever seen; they all had a single horn atop their heads. These fantastical wolves did not run rampant or howl in away but were quiet like pets that had been tamed. Sitting atop the largest one was the woman that posed the question to the wolves earlier.

She was a woman with an enchanting gaze. Her beauty so great one might think it otherworldly and her figure was beyond compare. Her gorgeous red wine dress showed off great amounts of skin and her well-endowed breasts looking as if they were on the verge of being exposed. Everything about her would captivate anyone who would lay their eyes upon her and her peerless beauty.

“We must be sure to find myself someplace to live. My castle in Human World that is,” said the woman as she extended her beautiful hand to rub the back of a nearby beast’s head.

“I wonder what a good place to live would be... I know!” said the woman as she made a coy smile.

“I will dispose of the next person who enters the forest and take their home for myself. Should I not like my new home I need only do it again,” the woman chuckled. Her name was Lucia von Elde Fern. As a Witch, she was now a part of the strongest race now that the Vampires had perished.

“I would hate it if my castle wasn’t strong and cute after all.” The day progressed and the angle of the sun began to change. The sunshine filtering through the trees one could see from the window began to fade and darkness began to settle into the cabin. All that could be heard in the darkness was the sound of the woman’s bewitching laughter and the growling of her beasts.

Chapter 3 – The Beautiful Witch

“Oh man! This is just awesome! We seriously made it all the way here in a single jump. This thing’s really handy.”

“Quit getting excited over every little thing. What are you child?”

“No matter how old a man gets they never forget what it’s like to be a kid.”

“Hmpf.”

“But I’ve got to ask, are you okay after making a fantastic jump like this? What’re we going to do if we hit somebody?”

“There is no need to worry about that. This ‘Ship’ device has the same sort of magic incorporated into it as our school uniforms that prevents people from recognizing us so no one will see us while we are in transit.”

“I see.”

“Tuli, let me just confirm this with you one more time. Our objective this time will be reinvestigating the woods. If we feel that there is anything then we will return to the academy right away and inform the Knight Squad.”

“Yeah, yeah, you don’t have to keep telling me, I got it already.” While the two of them were talking, there was a pair of eyes watching them. Towering above them in a massive nearby tree was a black squirrel. The squirrel had a fur unlike any animal in the human world and red eyes that stared intently at the uninvited guests. Its vision being shared with its master deep within the woods.

“A man and a woman, hm,” muttered Lucia in a seductive voice as she was watching the images run through her head.

“Those clothes... I wonder if they are involved with the Knight Squad... If that is so then they must be mages. Yes. I can certainly sense magic coming from them.” The name of the Gouma Knight Squad is well-known throughout the Demon World. There are many who are hunted by them as soon as they enter the Human World and occasionally there are times where the Gouma Knight Squad will make expeditions into the Demon World as well. As far as the magic races are concerned, they are one of the things to be wary of.

“Could it be that one of those two was the one who defeated my pet dragon I had been using as a lookout? Hmmm, I had even made a point of choosing a pet that would not be so easily defeated as well,” said Lucia, her face composed and

showing no signs of either danger or panic. Or so it would seem, anyway. To Lucia, the dragon that was defeated was nothing more than one of her many familiars. When it came to their master she wielded a power that could not even compare to theirs.

“I know, if they are from the Gouma Knight Squad then this is perfect. I will make the place where those two lived my castle.” If they are mages then they are sure to be living someplace nice. Such was the thought that was running through Lucia’s head as she then went about watching the footage sent from her sentinel once again and started forming a plan.

“As I thought, the woman is sure to live someplace that is adorable. I’m sure of it. I will be sure to take her alive and have her lead me to her home. If that is so, then...” Lucia went on, now with a cruel grin on her face, “I do not believe I will need the man.” An opportunity was soon to come.

“Oi, Yukiha, you think we could split up from here on out?”

“Hm? Why do you ask?”

“Well it would be faster that way, wouldn’t it? Its simple math, if two people search on their own at the same time then they’ll be able to cut their search time in half.”

“That... May be so, but...”

“What? You are going to be lonely with me gone?”

“Do-Don’t be ridiculous! It’s just that, well...”

“Don’t worry about it. If anything happens I’ll save you in no time flat.”

A-All right, With this, the two of them soon split up. Once Lucia saw this through the eyes of her beast she could not help but let a smile break out on her face. She then stood up from the beast and walked out of the small cabin.

“Play, play girls, Dance, dance Venus,” said the woman as she spun her words together as though she were singing all the while bathing in what little twilight was breaking through the trees. This was an incantation. It was her magic and her magic alone that allowed her to utilize her “Original Sin” which was her own magic.

“Babylon Luxuria”

Zuzu.

Zuzuzuzuzu.

Zuzuzuzuzuzuzuzuzuzuzuzu.

It was a strange screeching sound that seemed to linger in the air. This sound that would make one want to cover their ears without realizing it emanated from the witch's feet. The black shadow of her sensual silhouette against the ground then began to warp and distort itself. The shadow then grew and from it came a single a dog. Then after that dog broke free from her shadow more and more came to be born. One after another more crawled out of the pitch black darkness that was her shadow as though they were rising from the grave. It was almost like witnessing the gates of hell being open. Or, for all we know, this may very well be what that would look like.

“That's it. Be born. Be born my adorable pets.” In the end, there were: lion's, phoenixes, snakes, wolves, dogs, cats, unicorns, drakes, and flying horses. Every one of them looking as different from any animal ever seen in the human world, in total there were about one hundred of them. With a myriad of monsters at her beck and call she then smiled an empress and said, “Uhu, now then, let us get started.”

Each Witch is able to use a special kind of magic that only they can use known as their “Original Sin.” This magic is different from flame magic or lightning and much of the magic that the magic races use are completely different from the everyday magic that humans use. Their magic is well beyond that of a human's. A human's and a Witch's ability to use magic is not even worth comparing. The magic in which a Witch can use is on a whole other scale and level of destructive power. It was once said that Witches were able to stand on equal footing with the immortal Vampires because of the unnaturally high number of Witches who could utilize their Original Sin. In this case, Lucia von Elde Fern's unique magic was “Babylon Luxuria,” which gave her the power to create an infinite number of magical beasts.

“I found you,” said Lucia as she used one of her hands like a telescope and located her target, the boy, a few kilometers away. From what she could tell from seeing him passing between the dense forest of old trees he was just walking casually

walking with his hands in his pockets. In the next minute, however, the boy then started looking all over the place and checking his surroundings.

“No way, It cannot be, did he sense me?” Herself aside, she made a point of stifling the mana of her subordinates. The same could be said for her presence and bloodlust, suppressing them to their very limits so as to avoid detection. The reason for all this was because Lucia did not want to be noticed. This is precisely why she held her breath and was waiting for an opportunity to present itself and yet he was able to sense her from that a great distance? Just how strong was this boy that was in her sight? While Lucia was still surprised, the boy had stopped walking. Turning his back on her and then making movement around his lower abdomen. Lucia’s face then took on a very sour look.

“Was his looking this way and that and splitting up from his partner all for this?” she thought. What the boy was about to start was the act of urination. In layman’s terms he went to, “take a leak.” On the verge of relieving himself, the boy then raised his voice, exposed his lower extremity and began to return the water that was built up in his body back to the forest.

“How dare him... How dare he scare me like that! No, I wasn’t scared. I wasn’t scared in the slightest bit,” thought Lucia to herself as she seemed to seethe with anger and began to take it out on the boy. Lucia then mounted a large black serpent that was nearby and began giving orders to her obedient servants that were standing behind her.

“Go forth my adorable pets! Eat to your heart’s content!” In that instant, all the beasts that were being kept behind her were now let loose. The large mass of pitch black then scattered and rushed into the forest and out of sight. Now all thought of nothing but sinking their fangs, horns, beaks or claws or whatever they had into their target.

“Hm? Uh- Uaaaaaaah! What, Where did you all come from? As the boy was right in the middle of relieving himself the boy could not help but feel dismayed by this sudden attack. His hands being occupied as they were the boy had no means of fighting them off.

“Ho-Hold on, wait a second, I’m almost done! Gyaaaaaaaaa!” screamed the boy as he found himself being trampled underfoot by a herd of black beasts unable to oppose them and having no choice but to take their attacks head-on.

“Uhu. Uhuhuhu.” The beasts she had sent were late in returning so Lucia, who was still astride the giant snake, then went to where the boy was. Upon finding him, she could not help but look amused at the state he was in.

“For you to die with your lower extremities exposed like this has to be the most miserable way to for a man to die. Ahaha, do forgive me,” sneered Lucia as she continued watching her beasts prey on him. As she was watching this grisly scene of predation she could not feel that something was wrong.

“What’s this? There’s no blood,” she thought. Be it on the ground or the bodies of her beasts there was not a single drop of blood to be found. If this were like always the fur of her beasts would be dyed red and yet-

THUD

“Eh?”

*THUD*THUD*THUD*

Lucia could not believe her eyes. All the beasts that she believed had attacked the boy started to collapse one after another, all of them unmoving and unconscious. The beasts that had attacked him continued to fall off him until finally one could make out his figure among all the unconscious beasts.

Lucia was speechless. Astounded at what she was seeing. For what she saw was the boy, standing upright, and still continuing to pee. He did not move a single step and continued to relieve himself almost as though nothing had happened at all while exuding a very imposing air about him, his back looking rather manly as well.

“Wha- Eeh? Wh-Why are you not-“

“Why you... I can’t believe you did that,” said Iuli in a low voice which left Lucia, shocked by this whole scene, at a complete loss for words. Looking as though he finally finished relieving himself he then shook his body a few times, closed up his pants and then turned around to look at Lucia.

“I don’t know who you are or where you come from but don’t go getting in the way of someone’s sacred bathroom time. Learn to take a hint, will you?!” said Iuli

whose eyes, full of anger, seemed to pierce Lucia's very being. As far as taking hints was concerned, the most opportune time to attack a human being is when they are busy relieving themselves so Lucia took that as a hint to attack him. Whatever the case, she could not help but feel that the boy who was able to pull off his relieving himself was not reading the mood very well but he just continued to grumble.

"I mean honestly... If you scare me like that I'm going to have trouble going. Aw man, I think there's still some left over. Shit, is this that constant urge to pee that every middle-aged person has to deal with? This is just freaky."

"You... Just what did you do to my beasts?"

"I didn't do anything," said the boy flatly, filling Lucia's head with doubts. She did not know if it showed on her face or not but Iuli then went on to explain himself.

"You know how there are people like me who always cloak themselves in a weak layer of mana, right? Well it was thanks to that that I am still standing right now." The ones who are able to generate man within their own bodies are the magic races as well as a percentage of the human beings. They are able to generate unconsciously as well as circulate it throughout their bodies. Depending on how much training one does it is possible to manipulate the flow of one's mana to make it visible as well as do the opposite and suppress it. In fact, that was the exact thing that Lucia was doing until today. She was suppressing her energy to its very limits in a vain attempt to hide her presence.

"So to put it simply, my 'weakest' is stronger than your beasts when they were at their 'strongest.' That's all it boils down to, in the end."

"Impossible," thought Lucia. The attack power of her beasts was by no means that weak. What's more, the ones she had brought about this time were specialized breed that were made for fighting. For her beasts to be unable take down one human at their full strength was nothing short of unbelievable.

"Just who are you?"

"I'm Asagami Iuli and technically I guess I'm a mage." A mage the general term for one, who has dabbled in the magical arts, goes about bringing an end to magical beings.

“These magical beasts,” muttered the boy, Iuli, as he looked at the numerous magical beasts at his feet.

“I guess these are your familiars, huh. This color looks a lot like the color of that dragon not too long ago... So does that mean that you were the one controlling that dragon, too?”

“Yes, that’s right,” said Lucia with a smile, “I brought it into the world with lots of love just like this!” Lucia then overdramatically raised her arms and then bellowed the words:

“Babylon- Luxuria!”

In an instant, her shadow warped and became larger and from the pitch black darkness came a single beast, a very bizarre one at that. It had had the body of a lion and yet it had two heads, one a lion and the other of a goat and the tail turning into that of a snake as well. It was as if multiple animals had been mixed together to form this miraculous creature. This grotesque beast was a chimera and was brought about by Lucia’s power. Her ability of combining animals together again was a special characteristic of her Original Sin.

“Hmmm... That speed, scale and output of your magic... It’s not just some simple summoning magic, huh... So I guess that makes that your Original Sin then. Sheesh... So there really was a witch here,” said Iuli, thinking that the bad feeling he had was right on the money.

“That’s right. I am a Witch. I am far superior existence that doesn’t even compared to you lowly humans,” declared Lucia in an arrogant tone as she stroked the pitch black fur of her composite beast.

“My name is Lucia von Elde Fern. You best remember it for it is the name of the most beautiful woman in all of Demon World,” continued Lucia as she then went about pouring her magic into her beast in anticipation of her chimera’s fight with Iuli. Whatever the case, she understood that the boy had an abnormally strong defensive power.

So strong in fact that it did not look like it could be broken with an ordinary attack spell. So in that case she had only one choice: to concentrate on breaking through his defenses at a single point and aim for a critical hit.



“Take this!” yelled the woman, letting loose her chimera. The hungry beast moving at such a speed that the eye could barely keep up with it as it was bearing down on

its target. On one hand Iuli neither put up a defensive stance, nor showed any sign of trying to evade its attack and simply stood where he was they clashed.

It looked as though the chimera sank its sharp powerful fangs into the boy's soft flesh- but to no avail. The fangs of the beast stopped right at his skin. The chimera boasted incredible biting strength that could tear its victims to pieces but not only could it not bite him it could not even get one tooth to touch him.

"Haha, way to go pup, what, Huh, or were lions related to cats?" Despite having a beast much larger than himself trying to make a meal of him his tone remained nonchalant.

"It's really amazing that it can stay conscious even after attacking me. Most of the ones that attack me end up self-destructing when they touch my mana." In spite of saying, Iuli then made his hand into a fist.

"Your drool's dirty so back off for a little... bit!" It was a simple punch. There was hardly any room for him to pull back his punch but nevertheless he unleashed it on the beast. It well exceeded a simple thud and sent the chimera's massive body flying through the air like a rocket. Almost like some kind of bad joke, the creature finally stopped after knocking over a dozen trees and falling to the ground. Utterly stunned, Lucia could not help but let her jaw drop.

"Just who... Just who is this human?" thought Lucia. Seeing Iuli wield such unbelievable power Lucia could not help but fear him. Lucia von Elde Fern was by no means weak. Her Original Sin, "Babylon Luxuria," was an incredibly fearsome power of hers. She was able to create an endless number of magical beasts that felt neither fear nor rebellion and simply followed her commands. In other words she was able to create army that followed her every command and did not fear death. Being able to summon thousands of magical beasts who were at her beck and call the word "one woman army" was most suited for her. She was one of the chosen strong and was able to topple an entire country by herself as well. However, her armies of magical beasts weren't able to harm him. At this point she was all out of options. Lucia was now driven into a corner the likes of which she had never experienced before.

"Ah, well, let's see... I know you're pretty shocked right now," said Iuli as he looked troubled while Lucia on the other hand felt nothing but despair.

“But don’t worry. I don’t plan on fighting you and I don’t plan on hurting you, either.” It was the after this that Iuli said something unbelievable:

“I make it my policy to not hit women.”

Asagami Iuli will, under no circumstances, hit a woman. In his mind there was no such option. What’s more, to him she was not just Witch but a fine woman as well. Regardless of whether she was currently the strongest Witch in all of Demon World she was someone to be protected as well as a treasure that was never to come to harm.

“But I’ve got to say she’s a real beautiful, sexy lady, huh... Wait, not that!” thought Iuli as unwanted fantasies began to creep into his head and stop his thinking. Once his thoughts were in order, he once again looked straight at Lucia. Her eyes were wide open and looked to be shocked. Seemingly at a loss about what to do after witnessing his power as well as hearing his claim of “not hitting women.”

“Just what are you trying to do? Is this some kind of feint?”

“No, I’m serious.”

“But I am a Witch, you know? In the eyes of your mages of the Knight Squad am I not an enemy who must be defeated?”

“Yeah, it kind of looks that way, huh. But then again, I don’t plan on taking part in a mission like that or anything like that until the day I die. I won’t fight somebody I don’t want to fight.” Though Iuli said this in a very carefree way the Witch was anything short of bewildered. Perhaps it was due to the horrendous gap between their powers that she felt that he was looking down on her but Iuli himself had no such intention. His intention was to be as sincere and truthful as he could be with her. Though he had a fist that could end everything with a single blow Asagami Iuli had no desire to use it. One of his policies was that if he ever fought that he would fight with his all but from other people’s standpoints it may very well look like he is holding back. In other words, he may come off someone who likes to be rough but is actually soft. Iuli himself once felt that same way towards his master. When it came to fighting it felt like Julius never fought him seriously and he always hated it. His master’s always holding back against women aside, Iuli then couldn’t help ask the man whose hobby was tormenting runts whenever he felt like it, “why don’t you fight seriously?” voicing his dissatisfaction.

“What are you stupid?” snapped Julius as he was asked the question but then showed a cynical grin his face, “being able to choose between being rough and being soft is the spice of life.” In the end, to this very day, Iuli is still struggling to figure out what his master meant by that. If one was to translate this in the most positive way it would be, “Being rough on yourself is the very definition freedom,” which ultimately wouldn’t be too much of a stretch. Whatever the case, even if it was a little forced, Iuli convinced himself that that was what he meant. Be as rough as you can. Be as soft as you can. Give it everything you have and don’t.

“You said your name was Lucia, right? For starters, why don’t you tell me why you came here to the human world? Depending on what you say, I might have to get rough with you but depending on what you say it could be the opposite. If you quietly go back to the Demon World I won’t mind escorting you part of the way, you know?” said Iuli jokingly. For a short time Lucia looked as though she was contemplating it but:

“Uhu Uhuhu,” ultimately, a bewitching smile appeared on her face.

“There are people like you who pop up every now and then, aren’t there. Going about spouting such things as feminism or what have you as well as being rough on oneself when nobody asked them to. Saying such naïve things like you will not kill women and children and becoming addicted to the catharsis of it all. Whenever I fight someone like that that, this is what I think,” continued Lucia as she made a grin on her face that looked like it would cause her red lipstick to crack.

“I’m so lucky to have such an idiot for an opponent.” Once she said this, Lucia then took one step and then another, closing the distance between her and the boy.

“Ah, I knew it, so it did turn out like this,” muttered Iuli under his breath. With this he was sure that she came to the Human World for some reason and that it was because of it that she would not go back that easily.

“Now then, just what should I do?” thought Iuli to himself as he let his head lean to the side. Before he realized it, however, Lucia had closed the gap between them a great deal. Enough so that they were not only within striking distance of each other but they could practically butt heads. Bringing her head in closer, she then went on to look at his face as though it were a work of art in a museum.

“Hmmm, your face is, well... passable I suppose. I certainly cannot complain about your strength, though.”

“Wha-What’s with you?” said Iuli, feeling a little uneasy. Out of reflex, Iuli then took a step back and upon seeing this Lucia could not help but let a faint smile show on her face.

“All right, I have decided,” stated Lucia as her bewitching gaze and mischievous eyes were all focused on Iuli. What then passed through her lustrous looking lips was something that Iuli never would have thought he would hear her say.

“Won’t you become my boyfriend?”

“Huh?”

“Just what is going on here?” asked Kudoin Yukiha, struggling to believe what she was seeing with her own two eyes. After parting ways with Iuli and hearing howling, tremors as well as the sounds of an incredible struggle echoing throughout the forest Yukiha had rushed back to the source of all this commotion and what she saw was:

“Oh. Yukiha. You okay?” asked Iuli. Talking as though the situation he was in wasn’t awkward and not feeling nervous at all.

“My, my, if it isn’t the woman that was with you before, it’s nice to meet you,” said the woman whose outfit showed off much of her beautiful skin as well as held hands with the boy in an overly familiar way. Though she was beautiful she had a suspicious air about her.

“Iuli... Who is she? Yo-You’re not telling me that she’s...”

“Ah, yeah, she’s a Witch.” It was just as she thought. Though he wasn’t acting nervous Iuli had found himself in an incredible situation. Looking utterly bewildered at first, Yukiha then collected herself and focused her gaze on the woman again.

“Nooo, don’t just reveal who I am like that, darling. It’s more interesting to let the tension build and then reveal it.”

“Da-Darling?!” replied Yukiha in anger who then glared at him.

“Ju-Just what is the meaning of this, Iuli?! Explain yourself!” Upon hearing this, Iuli started scratching his head in thought but then went on to say, albeit sounding a little troubled:

“It seems that she wants to play around in the human world.”

Chapter 4 – Game of Tag

There are many reasons for why a magic being would come to the Human World. There are those who come to invade and those who just come on their master’s orders. Lastly would be those who simply wish to wreak havoc. There are also those who come to the Human World after losing a fight between magical beings... The list goes on. Usually there is no room for leniency for magic beings that have come to the Human World due to extenuating circumstances. Most come due to reasons that people would find unacceptable but among them are those who truly had no choice but to come to the Human World. Of those who have come to the Human World, Lucia von Elde Fern’s reason was, “because the Human World looked like fun” and nothing more. In the end, both Iuli and Yukiha chose not to report her to the Knight Squad.

“Hm, well, its fine isn’t it? Even if we leave Lucia alone she said she wouldn’t cause any trouble while she’s here.”

“Well, it is not because I wholly distrust her and what she said, but... If ever there comes a time where Witches are being subjugated the Knight Squad will be sure to send a large number after her. I do not know just how strong Lucia is but it is probably safe to assume that there will be casualties if she was to fight. Therefore, our main priority is to just let her have her fun and then have her return to the Demon World.”

“You’re really nice, huh, Yukiha.”

“Wha-What are you saying all of a sudden?!”

“After finding the Witch, you prioritized your friend’s safety over getting glory, right?”

“That may be so, but... It was not because I was being nice. In the end... I did it for my sake. I just concluded that it would be more advantageous having her cooperate with us than reporting her to the Knight Squad and nothing more. In time, having a link to the Demon World without having to go through the Knight Squad may prove beneficial to me.”

“Hmmm... I see you really thought this through, huh,” was how the conversation between them went as the two decided to keep quiet about the Witch. As for the very Lucia in question it looked as if she disappeared somewhere while the two of them were talking. Whether it was someplace she wanted to go or she just returned to the Demon World no one could say for sure. It was even possible that they would never see her again. One might think such a thing at least but, the next day and the day after that, whenever Iuli woke up he would find himself within a certain someone’s enchanting gaze.

“Awww, you woke up,” said Lucia in a disappointed tone. Puckering her beautiful lips in a pout, just as he thought he would never see her again he would end up doing just that the very next day. He would find Lucia on his bed, on her hands and knees, trying to make advances towards him. Her pose was that of being like a carnivore that determined what its prey will be. Her face being close enough that he could feel her breath. Naturally, the eyes would go right to the chest as that is what becomes emphasized when a woman gets down on her hands and knees. Though separated by a thin piece of cloth her breasts both wobbled and jiggled all the same.

“I was just thinking of waking you up with a good morning kiss, too.”

“Where am I? Is this heaven?”

“Ahaa, this might be hell, you know?”

“For now, do you think you could get off me?”

“Aaahn, you meanie,” said Lucia as Iuli, still waking up, went about moving the beautiful woman off his bed. He then let out a yawn and began grumbling questions at her:

“You, Why are you in my room?”

“Because the door was unlocked”

“Ah, oh right, I went to bed without locking it, huh,” replied Iuli, slightly regretting his careless ways.

“But even if that’s true humans don’t just go waltzing into other people’s homes, you know.”

“So what, I am your girlfriend after all aren’t I, Iuli-kun?”

“But I said no yesterday.”

“Eeeh? This cute girl wants to go out with you and you refuse her? I can’t believe it!”

“Loose women aren’t my type,” said Iuli flatly. He did not say this because she wasn’t his type but more because he thought she wasn’t serious.

“All right, let me rephrase the question. Lucia: how did you get into the academy?” The reason why Iuli asked was because he had heard that the academy was protected by a strong anti-magic races barrier brought about by its magic circle. Magic races, especially Witches, shouldn’t be able to get in.

“Oh, well you see,” said Lucia as she set herself on the bed. She then took her breasts into her hands and grabbed them with all her strength.

“Whoa,” was the only word Iuli could think of. Probably due to his being male he found that he could neither move nor look away as Lucia then went about spreading her breasts apart and showing off even more cleavage.

“What’s with the show? You want me to stick money in there or something?”

“Ahaha, you can stick something else in here if you like,” replied Lucia, a mischievous grin showing on her face. She then closed her eyes so she could concentrate. In so doing, her cleavage, in this case around her heart, a strange design started to appear. It was a tattoo of two snakes of deep crimson entwined with one another.

“Is that a tattoo?”

“That’s right. This is a magic sealing crest. It’s an exceptionally powerful magic that allows me to suppress my magic to its limits so that my magic would be no different from a human’s.”

“No kidding. So that’s why you were able to break through the barrier without a problem. I heard this academy’s barrier only reacts to magic beings with strong magic.”

“That’s how I did it. There are many in the Demon World who excel at this sort of thing. This was quite expensive I will have you know,” said Lucia as she took her hands off her chest. The magic crest then disappeared and her breasts fell back into place.

“I... or for that matter Witches have an unbelievable amount of mana. If I had not gotten this magic crest I would have been detected the instant I came into this world,” explained Lucia. The magic crest apparently allows visiting Witches to go undetected by the Knight Squad.

“So this was why I couldn’t really sense that she was a Witch yesterday,” thought Iuli. Satisfied with her answer he then went on to ask another:

“But, if that’s so, doesn’t that mean that you’re a lot weaker in a fight now?”

“For the most part, I have become weaker than I was before. I can use my own personal magic but I cannot use anything else. If I was to face a fairly strong opponent I might end up losing. What’s more, this magic crest won’t disappear until I return to the Demon World.”

“Why would you go that far?”

“I told you didn’t I that I wanted to come here. This place looks like fun,” answered Lucia to which Iuli didn’t have anything to say in response and a brief silence expired between them.

“The Demon World is a dank, dark place that seems to always reek of blood. The plants there are all but disgusting as well. It’s not cute at all! So in that regard, isn’t this place just marvelous? It’s all shiny and bright. Not to mention all the clothing and accessories here are all just so cute!” exclaimed Lucia as her eyes seemed to hold an innocent, child-like sparkle.

“I am able to share my vision with my pets, after all. I would send them here countless times to look at all sorts of places. I would also have them bring back magazines and clothing for me as well. Once I did that I just couldn’t stand staying in the Demon World any longer. The war with the Vampires was over, after all.”

“So... You’re here to see the sights,” replied Iuli in a deflated, muttering tone.

“Lucia, is that really the only reason you came here? You threw away half your power and are running around in secret just for that?”

“Yes. That’s right. I threw away everything just so I could come here,” nodded Lucia, showing no signs of hesitation in her voice.

“It’s not as if... I don’t have my pride as a Witch. But beyond that I, myself, am more important. If I cannot do what I want then having ‘power’ is meaningless,” continued the weakened Witch, simply explaining herself and not feeling ashamed about it at all.

“I see. That is true. You’re exactly right there.” If one can’t do what they want then “power” is meaningless. The values that Lucia held were ones Iuli could empathize with.

“All right, that’s enough serious talk. Hey, Iuli-kun, let’s go somewhere fun,” stated Lucia as she stretched out both her arms above her head. Though they were big to begin with, now that she was stretching, her breasts were emphasized all the more.

“What’s with you? Are you coming on to me? You trying to say I can touch them or something?”

“Ahaa, would you like to?”

“I’ll pass,” answered Iuli as he started to look uncomfortable and Lucia, upon seeing this, showed off her mischievous smile while bringing her body closer to his.

“I have been thinking this since yesterday, but... Even though you like to make dirty jokes as well as talk about vulgar things you have never actually had sex have you, Iuli-kun?”

GULP

“It couldn’t be that you’re the type who likes to embarrass innocent girls with your dirty jokes but go limp when a girl takes you seriously, are you? Or could it be that...” said Lucia as she stared at “that” while saying this next line:

“You like to act like a man but are actually inexperienced?” Despite trying to remain composed on the outside Iuli’s mind couldn’t be any more rattled. The truth of the matter was that Iuli’s master, Julius, had taken him to all kinds of “adult” meeting places on more than one occasion. As a result, Iuli came to learn about sex as well as how to tolerate dirty talk.

“But... There was one thing he never told me,” thought Iuli. Whenever Julius was in the midst of his “fun” Iuli had decided that it would be best that he take Seria someplace else. Admittedly he got many “invitations” from women but, for the sake of Seria’s upbringing, he distanced himself from all of that. The result then was that Iuli developed a strange sort of character trait where even though he liked girls and knew how to interact with them but was still inexperienced.

“Ahaha, I knew that was the case. You are so cute,” said Lucia with a smile.

“Shit, if only it was Yukiha I was dealing with I’d be able to take control of the situation,” thought an annoyed Iuli as his mind then wandered to thoughts of the overly serious girl he had just met.

The-Then what about you?

“Myself? Uhuhu, I wonder that myself. The one thing I suppose I can say is that I have rehearsed it to perfection in my mind.”

“Then you’re as inexperienced as I am!”

“Indeed. It certainly looks that way. Seeing as how that is the case for both us, what say you and I practice together?” answered Lucia along with something outrageous as she drew herself closer to “it.” Taking on a pose that accentuated her chest or more accurately a pose that was reminiscent of some carnivorous beast, Iuli’s body then reflexively began to shake and he escaped to the corner of his bed.

“Ju-Just what am I going to do?” thought Iuli.

“Just what am I doing?” said Yukiha to herself as she stood just outside of the boy’s dorm and letting out a large sigh. She came to see Iuli who lived on the fourth floor about something, but:

“All right, here I go... Ah, but, on second thought,” went Yukiha on and on for thirty minutes as she lingered by the entrance to the boy’s dorm. In her hand was a cardboard box. A mont blanc cake inside it. What’s more, this wasn’t just a cup size amount meant for one person you could buy at a convenience store but a whole cake that could serve well over two people. That said, this wasn’t a cake she had bought at a store but one that she had made herself just that morning.

“Uuu... I knew it, I should have just gone with a store-bought one,” continued Yukiha. Her hobby of making sweets was only known to a select few. This was because she was so embarrassed by it that she couldn’t bring herself to tell just anybody about it. Before she even met Iuli, Yukiha was always looking for a chance to try and make a mont blanc. Such was why she woke up early and gave her all to making the cake for him but... She had a feeling she put too much effort into it.

“What do I do? I knew it, if I suddenly give him a homemade cake he might be weirded out by it instead. I wonder if he will think of it is too much.” What’s more is the fact that she intended to give him a whole cake and not just a slice. As things stood, there were already two reasons why she couldn’t just give the cake to him.

“T-To begin with, I only meant to bring him this as a show of my gratitude for yesterday... now that I have gone through the trouble of making it myself... It’s almost as if I made it because... Uu, uuu,” Yukiha went on as she continued to agonize over what to do, moaning all the while.

“O-Oh enough already, there is no point in overthinking it now!” With that, Yukiha raised her head and went about telling herself, “it will be okay,” over and over again. She went about squeezing out every last ounce of courage she could muster and began climbing the stairs of the boy’s dorm. Finally arriving at Iuli’s room on the fourth floor, Yukiha then went about taking some deep breaths but then noticed noises coming from his room.

“Uhuhu, its fine, isn’t it?”

“Kuu. Kno-Knock it off! Stay away! Put those weapons of mass destruction away!”

“Are you blushing? Aha, you are so cute.”

“Kuu... Don-Don’t underestimate me!”

“Kyan! Eh?! Wha-?! No, hold on, this is too sudden! Sto-Stoop!”

“Haha... Hahahaha. I’ve got your number!”

“Eh?”

“You’re just like me, aren’t you? You say yes but then you chicken out at the last minute, huh?”

“Wha-?! A-Absolutely not! I am not chickening out at all!

“Hahahaha, I bet you didn’t even plan on going all the way. You’re nothing but talk.”

“Uuuu! Aah, now I’m really mad! Wha-What do you say to this?!”

“Huwha-?! Yo-You... Knock it off! That’s against the rules!” retorted Iuli. Yukiha outside the door thinking the two of them were having a fight.

“A-Are you all right, Iuli?!” called Yukiha, worried about what was going on and barged through the door. Upon entering the room she came upon Iuli and Lucia, their clothes disheveled and locked in some sort of embrace.

“Ju-Just what do you all think you are doing?!” yelled Yukiha, her voice echoing throughout the whole dorm. The two of them were frozen in place. They then distanced themselves from each other and straightened out their clothes.

“Wha-What are you doing in this hallowed place of learning?! I-I-It’s just immoral!”

“Ah, well... You see, uh...”

“Ah-ah, it’s too bad we were interrupted,” said Lucia who was by Iuli’s side, pouting her lips as she said this.

“We will just have to continue this another time, Iuli-kun.”

“That’s rich coming from you. It’s not like you had any intention of going all the way anyway, you wannabe slut.”

“Huh? Is this the mouth that said that just now? Was it? Tell me?”

“Da-Dat hawts! Kna-Knawk et off!”

“What are you doing flirting at a time like this, Iuli?!” demanded Yukiha after seeing Lucia pulling his cheeks out to their sides, her anger only becoming more intense.

“It’s not like I was trying to flirt... Wait, were we flirting?” pondered Iuli. In the end, it wasn’t just that. He was about to cross the line. Had Yukiha not come when she did there’s no telling what might have happened.

“Skin-ship, that’s right, skin-ship! That’s all it was. So don’t be so mad, Yukiha...”

“B-Be silent! While we’re on the subject, just what are you doing here?!” demanded Yukiha. Despite her tone, Yukiha acted as though she were addressing a classmate she were familiar and was on good terms with. When it came to Lucia, her guard was down.

“What? Is it so bad that I came over to play?”

“Of course it is. Just where do you think you are? This is a training institute run by the Gouma Knight Squad. From your perspective as a magic being you are in a place surrounded by your sworn enemies.”

“Don’t worry about it. I said it yesterday but I do not intend to do anything as long as they do not do anything to me first. So for now just think of it as abandonment play,” said Lucia, teasing her, and peeking at her face.

“For that matter, Yukiha-chan, what did you come here for? It is your day off and yet you come to Iuli-kun’s room in the middle of the afternoon? Did you two make plans to meet today?”

“N-No, we didn’t really make any plans.”

“Hmmm, then why did you come here?” questioned Lucia further. Yukiha then found herself at a loss for words and her eyes then began to dart all over the place. She looked to Iuli, to her own feet and then to the white box in her hand.

“Hm, what’s with the box, Yukiha?” asked Iuli out of curiosity which caused Yukiha to panic and hide the box behind her back.

“Thi-This is... nothing. Just ignore it.”

“Hmmm,”

“Um... The reason I came here is...” said Yukiha, hesitating shortly but then raising her head as something came to mind and said:

“Tha-That’s it, I came here to have Iuli teach me how to masturbate!” The two of them were speechless. There seemed to be a silence permeating the room where to break it was forbidden. Lucia was stupefied and Iuli smacked his forehead, falling deep into despair.

“As a mage, I cannot afford to miss a single day of training, after all. I must become stronger. Such is why I have come to Iuli’s place so that he may teach me how to masturbate, or more specifically, how to use advanced image training techniques. Yes. That is why I came today.”

Despite the ungodly awkwardness within the room Yukiha was the only one who looked proud of herself. Before, Iuli had misled her and now she has just blurted out that very something without any shame whatsoever.

“Hey, Iuli-kun,” whispered Lucia into his ear, “just what sort of play are you doing with Yukiha-chan?”

“That’s what I want to know!” For the most part, Iuli knew that things were going to backfire on him one day or other but now that it had come to this he just did not know what to do.

“Ooooh? Uhuhu. Well, I understand the gist of what is going on,” said Lucia with Iuli beside her and at his wit’s end, a smile coming over her face as though she had

figured everything out. Panicking, he tried to stop her but it was already too late. Yukiha was intrigued and could not help wanting to learn more.

“Do you know of it, Lucia?”

“I do. But you see, masturbation is...” replied Lucia in a sensual voice. An amused smile appearing on her face as she then filled Yukiha’s ears with lewd things. Corrupting what was once an innocent girl.

“Where you ***** , you see.”

“I see.”

“In essence you ***** yourself,”

“Is that so... Eh?”

“You go about it by using your *****.”

“What?! Eeh!?”

“Or perhaps using a *****.”

“?!?!?!?”

“There are also times where people use ***** as well.” Yukiha was shocked beyond belief, her face turning red, then blue, then red again making for a rather turbulent change in her face. Her gaze was unfocused and her shoulders started to shake. After hearing Lucia’s explanation, Yukiha had then realized her mistake.

“Ah, yup... It’s time to go,” thought Iuli. Glancing to the side, Iuli saw that Yukiha then started to move like a broken toy that had something break inside. It was here then that Iuli resolved to run as far, and as fast, as he could. He then quietly opened the window and jumped from his fourth floor room. After landing silently on the grass, he then started to run. Feeling as if there was going to be some kind of eruption coming behind him from his room. Such was how Yukiha’s and Iuli’s game of tag on the academy grounds began.

Ten minutes later.

“Sheesh, Lucia just had to open her big fat mouth. Man, this is scary,” said Iuli as he turned around and felt a chill go down his spine. What he saw before him was Yukiha, closing in, and cloaked in an aura befitting of a demon, her usual dignified aura seeming to have vanished completely. She had completely snapped and was now closing in on Iuli at an incredible speed.

“Wait! Wait right there! Asagami Iuliii!”

“Nobody waits when they’re told to!”

“How dare you. How dare you humiliate me like thaaat!”

“Oi! Don’t be so loud! You’ll cause a misunderstanding that way!”

“Shut up! Shut up! I will never forgive you!” Whether it was her angry voice or her insults, nothing stopped Iuli as he continued running. Even with the school building coming up right in front of him he didn’t change his pace at all and jumped. Barely reaching the air conditioner and window, he then scaled the six-story building at almost the exact same speed as he was running. Despite being movements that no ordinary person could do Iuli was able to perform them with ease.

“Did I lose her?” Iuli wondered to himself as he looked down from the roof to see if Yukiha was there.

“I won’t let you escape!” declared Yukiha as she reached for the holster on her thigh and then bringing out her artifact. Gripping it, she then started infusing it with her mana and assists her in using magic. Several slightly bright magic circles then appeared in midair leading up to the roof. Yukiha then jumped from one to the other as she headed towards the roof, and ultimately, towards him.

“She’s using ‘Step’?!” thought Iuli, panicking. Such was the name of the magic she was using. It is a basic magic that uses trace amounts of mana and compresses it in midair to form a platform where one can stand. The reason why it only uses trace amounts is so no one has to change the attribute of their magic to use it. Among all the movement techniques “Step” is by far the most basic of them all and it is for this very reason that one has to be careful not to overuse it. Where Yukiha’s use of the spell was concerned, however, her timing as well as her pinpoint accuracy was superb. She had a firm grasp of her how far she could jump as well as her speed and

made the most optimum path for her to make it to the roof. It was an excellent display of her abilities and she moved flawlessly.

“Not bad,” said Iuli as he made his way to jump to the roof of the next building. Naturally, Yukiha was hot on his trail using seemingly countless “Steps” to get after him. Using the roof and wall of the next building for leverage, their game of no holds barred tag continued on.

“Ooh,” said Iuli as he was using his physical abilities to move freely through the air. It was as he was moving that he spotted a familiar girl down below. There was a fountain as well as a courtyard with a colorful display of roses blooming and in between the two of them was a girl sitting comfortably on a bench.

It was Tsuji Yashiro, the girl he talked to only once when they were both taking the makeup test. After seeing her, Iuli stopped playing the runaway and made his descent. “I’m sorry, please hide me,” said Iuli as he hid himself under the bench without waiting for her permission to do so. As he stifled his breath the enraged Yukiha lost sight of him. She glanced from here to there and this way and that until finally she ran off to find her target.

“Phew, I’m saved. Thanks, Yashiro.”

“If that is so then I would like you to get out from under there,” replied Yashiro indifferently as he thanked her after sticking his face out from under the bench. After hearing this response, Iuli finally realized it. The place from which he stuck his head out was at a spot where it wouldn’t be surprising if he could see under her skirt and made for a rather racy situation.

“Oh, my bad,” replied Iuli as he got out from under the bench while apologizing and Yashiro held down the hem of her skirt. She showed no emotion in her face but it seemed like she really was embarrassed.

“Did you see them?”

“No... Unfortunately I didn’t,” Iuli responded honestly. Strangely enough though, Yashiro leaned her head in puzzlement.

“By unfortunately, do you mean to say that you would have liked to see them?”

“A-Ah... well, yeah, I am a healthy boy and all.”

“You’re quite perverted aren’t you, Iuli,” replied Yashiro indifferently. He had the feeling that her cheeks got a little red but he just couldn’t be sure. Her emotionless face was throwing him off.

“Don’t call me a pervert. All guys are perverts, you know.”

“Guys are perverts. Iuli is a guy therefore Iuli is a pervert.”

“What kind of reasoning is that?!”

“I am not mistaken,” said Yashiro proudly while Iuli was unable to say anything and just started scratching his face.

“So, what are you doing in a place like this?”

“I am practicing. Right now I am just taking a short break,” spoke Yashiro in short segments all the while holding her student I.D.

“Ah! Oh yeah, this becomes our magic implement, huh,” said Iuli as he pulled out his own from his pocket. All students that come to Seishun Academy are supplied with a student I.D. that is a card-type magic implement. As each one is embedded with a special kind of crystal they are about as thick and heavy as a smartphone. That being said, these cards are nothing more than training tools for beginners. What’s more, even though all students have one the truth is that only so many are able to use them. If one has a certain level of skill they are able to set it to make it their own ideal weapon. Then if one is especially skilled, such as a high-ranking student like Kudoin Yukiha, one will be supplied with their own personal artifact provided to them by the academy’s engineering department.

“Yashiro, you took the makeup test too, right? How did you do?”

“It was no good. That is why I am practicing,” answered Yashiro as she was infusing her mana into her student I.D. A faint light then appeared in midair. It then gradually became a bundle and after following her law it started to form into a magic circle. However, her magic circle had a warped shape to it.

“Hhn,” she said in an unfeeling way as she activated her magic and made a small fireball in the middle of the air. It was unstable, weaker than a candle’s flame and she could only hold it for a few seconds before it disappeared. It was a First Level Flame Magic known as “Fire.”

But the power was pitifully weak. Upon seeing the result, Yashiro had an expression on her face that was akin to boredom.

Magic is made from the primordial energy known as mana that has been given a certain law. Depending on which one is used the mana will become optimized and take shape as a spell. The clearly stated rules during the ritual to perform the magic are what transform it into a magic circle. Upon activating it, one must then take everything into account from the power of it, its target as well as its range. If done poorly, and the magic circle was not a perfect circle, then the magic circle will be misshapen and the magic it activates will fail.

“Don’t let it get to you. You’re able to activate your magic which is a lot better than me.” In this world there are those who are suited for magic and those who are not. In this case, Iuli was the latter.

“Before I was just bad at using magic, now I’ve got a whole other problem,” thought Iuli to himself, letting out a small sigh.

“I have found you, Iuli!” yelled Yukiha, her angry voice coming out of nowhere like a raging inferno. Iuli’s shoulder tensed right up. He then started to move rigidly like a machine as he turned to see where the voice was coming from and saw Yukiha closing in on him at an unbelievable speed.

“Oh crap... Catch you later, Yashiro!” said Iuli, making his farewell short as he ran off with lightning speed. In the end, Yashiro looked at him in a puzzled way.

“What a strange boy.”

And so their game of tag continued well after that. For an A-Rank mage like Yukiha, she used basic magic with ease such as Step, but in addition used “Speed,” “Full Burst” and has even gone as far as exhausting herself by using her ace in the hole, “Warp.” All of this was so she could chase down her target. Iuli’s physical abilities, however, were far above that. He was just running. Just jumping and ricocheting. Yet in spite of that Yukiha could not catch up to him. She was using all the magic she could muster to enhance her movements but she was losing to

someone who was just running. What's more, it did not look as though Iuli had gotten serious with her. Clouded by anger, Yukiha went all out in order to keep chasing him but he kept jumping this way and thought almost as if to ridicule her. Though he kept saying, "this is bad, this is bad," his face was still composed. Such was the begrudged girl and the untouchable boy. Their game of tag went on and on and no matter how long Yukiha tried she could not catch up to him. She just couldn't. Over and over again she just couldn't do it until finally:

"U-U-Uwaaaaaah," she broke down and cried. Her knees sticking out on both sides and crying out loud like someone who lost a loved one.

"Eeeeh?! Yo-You're crying?!" Iuli thought to himself. He was surprised to see her like this as he was running far ahead of her. Iuli then hit the brakes, made a U-turn and headed right towards her.

"Ho-Hold on... Yukiha-san,"

"Uu... Uu... Higuu... Just what are you? What are yooooou?" said Yukiha as she began to pound on his head and chest as she was crying and her face was bright red.

"It's not fair. It's just not fair. How can you be so fast? I won't be able to catch up with you at all!"

"Well it's not like I could let you catch me."

"And before I knew it, you had brought that Witch to your dorm room and started flirting with her!"

"It's not like there's anything wrong with that."

"You told someone like me, who was oblivious... A-An obscene word... You pervert."

"... That was wrong. I'm sorry."

"Uu... Uuu," Yukiha went on. Crying like a child and leaving Iuli deeply troubled. When all is said and done, he made a girl cry and felt incredibly guilty about it.

“Yukiha, I’m really sorry. This is all my fault. I’ll do anything you want so please forgive me,” stated Iuli, bowing his head but finding that she was still crying.

“I hate you. I absolutely hate you,” said Yukiha who was pouting like a child and which made Iuli all the more confused.

“What’s more... The Mont Blanc is...”

“Huh? Mont Blanc?”

“You had mentioned wanting to have one so... I made sure to bring one with me and yet...” The instant Iuli heard that word “Mont Blanc” his mind went into overdrive as he then thought:

“If she brought a Mont Blanc then it must be in that white box she brought. If she doesn’t have it with her now then she must have left it in my room. Right now it’s the beginning of summer so it’s kind of hot in my room... Which means...?”

“You should have told me that first thing!” Iuli’s movements were truly fast. He picked up Yukiha who had her head down and now carried her in his arms like a prince holding a princess.

“Hyan!” screamed Yukiha with her adorable scream however she did not have time to be worried about that.

“Let’s continue this back in my room.”

“Wha-?! Wait! Le-Let me go! Let me go you pervert!”

“You better hold on tight. I’m going to get a little serious here.”

“Eh? U-Uaaaaaah!” screamed Yukiha as Iuli ran at an unbelievable speed towards the boy’s dorm all the while carrying Yukiha in his arms. Stranger still was the fact that this wasn’t the speed that Yukiha was chasing after before but an even greater one. Having realized that Iuli was truly holding back as they were playing their game of tag only served to make her more depressed but Iuli didn’t realize it at all.



Fortunately for Iuli, the Mont Blanc had been put away in his room's refrigerator. Yukiha denied that she was the one who did so more than likely it was Lucia who

was looking out for him. Even though Iuli ended up disappearing on her she put it away for him and he couldn't be anymore grateful to her.

"I wonder where that Witch disappeared to."

"Who knows? Don't you think she just went out to play somewhere? That is why she came to the human world and all."

"If that is so that is great, but... I just hope she is not plotting something."

"We'll cross that bridge when we get to it," replied Iuli as he set plates and forks down with a clink and a clang.

"Haa, it looks so good. Thanks so much for this."

"You are not saying that you are going to eat that whole cake by yourself, are you?!" said Yukiha seeing a blissful look on his face. Yukiha, on the other hand, could not help but be a little repulsed at the idea of his eating the whole cake by himself.

"You really do eat a lot of that stuff by yourself, don't you?"

"As long as it is sweet I've always got room for more. Ah, did you want a bite?"

"I do not want it. Regardless... It is amazing how you can eat nothing but sweet things without any coffee or tea to go with it."

"Eh? Oioi, Yukiha, what's the point of eating something sweet only to drink something bitter to go along with it? That would completely ruin the sweetness of it." Yukiha was at a loss at how to respond to this and stayed silent, shaking her head as though she was giving up.

"If I comment on it I will lose," she thought to herself, "He is something that lives by a whole other set of rules."

"Well, I am glad you are happy about the cake. I was a little worried, after all."

"This is the best. Of all the Mont Blancs I've had before this is the best one I've ever had."

“Yo-You like it that much?”

“Yeah, Hey, Yukiha, where did you buy this? You’ve got to tell me.”

“Ah, well...” she went on to say, blushing and a little bashful, “I... was the one who made it.” After hearing this, Iuli couldn’t help but look at her wide-eyed.

“Yo-You see, the truth is that I quite enjoy making sweets and the like. It was my first time making a Mont Blanc but it was unexpectedly fun.” Iuli did not reply or say anything. He just simply looked on at her in amazement.

“Ma-Make sure you keep it a secret from everyone else okay? I-It’s embarrassing.”

“Yukiha,” he replied simply. After a few seconds silence, Iuli’s aura of playfulness disappeared and an uncomfortably serious expression came over his face. He then looked straight at Yukiha and sincerely asked her this:

“Please marry me.”

“Whaaat?!”

“And make me Gateau au Chocolat every day.”

“Do you mean to say that you will eat that every day?! No, I mean-“ More than likely, it was here that she realized she was commenting on the wrong thing and, in her panic, tried to correct herself.

“Ju-Ju-Just what are you saying all of a sudden?! Even if this is a joke this is a poor one!”

“It’s no joke. I’m serious. I decided that the one I was going to marry was someone who was good at making sweets,” replied Iuli, being the very definition of seriousness, and not looking as though he would turn around and say that he was joking. Yukiha’s face, on the other hand, turned a deep red and her head was swimming after hearing him say these things.

“Yo-You cannot be serious. You want to marry me because of that?”

“For me it’s a very big deal.”

“T-To begin with, we only just met and besides I-I do not have the time to waste on romance, so... well... what I am trying to say is... Whatever the case, the answer is no!” said Yukiha as she put her arms out to express her refusal.

“Haa... I see, that’s too bad,” replied Iuli, depressed at hearing her refusal. Seeing this, and seeing as how her anger hadn’t fully dissipated, Yukiha decided to keep the conversation going.

“Honestly... You do nothing but fool around!”

“I wasn’t fooling around at all.”

“Don’t lie! Fo-For someone to suddenly propose to someone else... Just how is that not fooling around?! Things like these have... Mo-More of an order to them.”

“I really felt that I wanted to marry you, Yukiha. But well, if you don’t want to then there’s nothing I can do about it. The cake was really good,” said Iuli who then added, “I also felt like I needed to take responsibility for teaching you naughty words and all.”

“You can forget about that already!”

“And for making you cry.”

“You can forget that as well!” yelled Yukiha in a loud, threatening tone.

“Anyway, mastur- that is forbidden, I say it’s forbidden so it’s forbidden!”

“Huh? I’m forbidden from masturbating, for how long? How long am I supposed to go without it?”

“I did not say anything of the sort! I am saying that you are forbidden from saying that word!”

“Oooh? So I’m not forbidden from masturbating, huh.”

“Wha- Kuu. Whether you want to or not is your decision.” Whether it was because of all the yelling she did or she was exhausted Yukiha found herself running out of breath. Looking pale, Yukiha then glared at him and said:

“Iuli... Do you really feel sorry for what you did to me?”

“How rude, of course I do,” answered Iuli. Well, he found her reactions hilarious so he would end up teasing her and it looked as though that was not going to stop anytime soon. After taking a deep breath, Yukiha walked to the corner of his room and opened the window. The night wind then filled the room and caressed her lustrous hair. Silence commanding the room for but a moment and all that one could hear was the sound of the wind blowing in.

“Iuli,” muttered Yukiha as she was facing the window with her back turned to Iuli. Her voice so eerily low that her panicked, shrill voice from before almost seemed like a lie.

“I believe you said, ‘I’ll do anything you want so please forgive me,’ is that correct?”

“Yeah, But please spare me any kinky requests, okay?” replied Iuli, as he almost spoke in a teasing way that would get her to react in some way or other. However, Yukiha did not respond to him at all. Instead, she quietly turned around and looked straight at him.

“Then I have a request I wish to ask of you,” Yukiha went on to say. Looking at him coldly and with a frigid gleam in her eyes, almost giving the impression that the temperature within the room was plummeting a great deal.

“Fight me – Asagami Iuli.”

Chapter 5 – That Which Falls From the Winter Sky Like Powdered Snow

It was like being at an ancient Roman arena. Stone walls surrounded the arena. Spectators sat in rows above it. While inside were the fighters who were able to fight to their heart's content thanks to the giant stone slab that was enshrined there.

“Haa. What a great view,” Iuli said in wonder as he looked around at the crowd as he stood on the circular slab. Looking up, one would see a blue sky as far as the eye can see as well as the radiant sun burning brightly. If one were suddenly told that this was actually deep underground there is no doubt that they would find themselves in disbelief.

“And here I thought the place where we had the makeup tests and the training area was big even though they were underground... Those places don't even hold a candle to this. Just what is with this academy?” It was after school on Monday. Just as he was shown around on the “Ship” Yukiha then brought him along someplace deep, deep underground and before he knew it he found himself in that unbelievable place.

“This is a different dimension that was made by magic. It is a completely different world from the Demon World as well as the Human World,” explained Yukiha as the two of them were facing off against each other in the middle of the stone slab.

“A completely different world, that's pretty awesome. Who made it?”

“It is not so much a ‘who’ but more of a ‘what’ as this dimension is a living being brought about by the ‘Mystery Circle.’ This place is known as ‘Space.’ Today I used the Roman Coliseum as the motif but there are others as well. There is a desert setting, space setting, and the depths of a volcano as well as others that can be made artificially.”

“Ooh?”

“This place, known as ‘Space,’ is a new style of training facility that was made ready to use three years ago. It was after the war between the Witches and Vampires ended that the Knight Squad really started becoming active in making training institutions as well as train to become stronger. As far as the ‘Mystery Circle’ is concerned it does not even compare to what it was like back then, its capabilities have greatly increased and is only getting better.”

“Wow. Either way this place is amazing. So this is another world, huh?” said Iuli who was honestly surprised to which Yukiha gave a bitter smile.

“That being said, though, this place is nothing more than a kind of illusion. It is a completely different world but at the same time it is also a world of only dreams as well as the mind.”

“Hm? Eh? What do you mean?”

“Would you understand it better if I said this were like an extremely sophisticated virtual reality? I myself do not know how this place works but either way, as we are now, we are both ourselves and yet not ourselves. Our five senses certainly work but these bodies of ours are nothing but the products of our own minds.” As Iuli hated difficult conversations like these Iuli stopped thinking too deeply about it and said:

“Hmmm Okay, I get it for the most part. So you’re basically saying that this is the dream world, huh,” he said to Yukiha and convincing himself in the process.

“This place has two benefits: One is that no matter how large a scale of magic you use you will not cause any harm to your surroundings.”

“Well yeah, this is the dream world and all.”

“The other is that you can train in actual combat here without having to put your life in danger. As long as you are within this space, no matter how severe your injuries are or even if it leads to your losing your life, it will not have any effect on your body in the real world. However, this place is only for gaining experience in battle as well as knowledge so this will not help to strengthen your body in any way, shape or form.”

“Well yeah, this is the dream world and all.”

“Do you really understand what I am trying to tell you?”

“I get the gist of it,” answered Iuli in a nonchalant, unashamed, way to which Yukiha let out a sigh as though she had given up trying to explain things to him.

“I understand. Let me put this in a much simpler way and just say what I wanted to say: In here, you can fight as seriously as you want without issue.”

“Oooh,?”

“With your need to worry about causing damage to your surroundings gone then you are free to show off your mana as well as your physical prowess. Of course, that also means you do not have to worry about causing anyone any injury, either.”

“Hey, Yukiha... Do I absolutely have to fight you?” asked Iuli. He said that he would do anything, and knew that it was bad to bring it up now, but.

“I don’t want to fight you.”

“Well, I want to fight you,” stated Yukiha, the eyes he saw in her were not that of a young girl but of a warrior on the battlefield.

“I am aware that you have a policy against hitting women but being here, in this ‘Space,’ then you can just put that policy aside for now, can’t you? Even if I incur any injuries here it won’t affect my real bo-“

“That’s not the problem here. I don’t hit women even in my dreams,” said Iuli. Even if it was all an illusion, he had no intention of wielding his power to hit a woman. He also had no intention of only following his principles when they suited him. If he was able to compromise his principles like that he would not have taken them up in the first place.

“What a hopeless fellow you are,” stated Yukiha as she shrugged her shoulders a little, “you cannot just assume that you will never find yourself in a fight with the opposite sex. However,” said Yukiha as she pointed to the stone slab they were standing on, “let us have whoever falls off this slab be the condition for losing. You won’t have a problem then, will you?” Of course, if she was rendered unable to fight that would also count as a loss but she had taken into account that Iuli would see his principles through to the end even in this separate dimension.

“So that’s why she set this coliseum up with this stage, huh,” thought Iuli.

“I don’t have a problem with it, but... Why do you want to fight me that badly?”

“Because I want to know, I want to know just how strong you are as well as just how strong I am,” said Yukiha in a powerful tone. To her, this matter meant everything to her.

“Are you satisfied now? If so then let’s begin,” said Yukiha as she reached for the holster on her thigh and brought out her Artifact.

“I, Kudoin Yukiha, holder of the 1st Rank at Seishun Academy, will now fight and show no quarter!” said Yukiha as she thrust her short sword out and then started infusing it with her mana.

“Crumble and shatter like thin ice,
Bloom wildly like a mad bloom.”

With her voice, words and power acting like a “catalyst” her artifact then started to change from its original form to its activated form. Made of the rare metal “Hihirogane,” not only does it change shape when given mana but the very properties and mass of it change as well and is an extremely unique metal. What was born of the combining of Hihirogane as well as magic implements was a weapon that served as both wand and sword. In addition, the very shape and abilities of the weapon is ever-changing as it reacts to each individual wielder’s mana and fighting spirit. With her Artifact having now received her mana, it’s true shape was then exposed for the whole world to see.

“Diamond Dust!” declared Yukiha in a bold voice as a kind of frigid whirlwind began to arise. The mana overflowing from Yukiha’s body then became a maddening blizzard that pierced Iuli’s body.

“So that’s your Artifact, huh,” said Iuli as she held a long sword that looked very much like an icicle. Its gleam was like that of a glacier and it was a long white sword, the width of it seemingly ill-fitting for a girl with such slender arms.

“No. This is not ‘Diamond Dust’s’ true form,” stated Yukiha as she gripped the sword and subtly shook her head. She then took her other hand to it and caressed the blade to then say:

“Shatter!” and with a snap as well as some other little sounds the sword destroyed itself. The trembling of the air as well as the delicate crushing sounds was by no means unpleasant and was actually melodic like an elegant, awe-inspiring

symphony. Be it either like glass or like ice crystals, Yukiha's Artifact had shattered. After the bulky sword had shattered, all that remained was a magnificent, ornamented rapier. With the shell that was the long sword shattered, the slender sword underneath then came into being. Now the countless shards of the shattered sword drifted through the air.

"This is 'Diamond Dust's' true form," Yukiha said in a proud sort of way and with her arms outstretched to an exaggerated degree.

"It can't be!" Iuli gasped as he then looked around him to confirm his surroundings. Though he could barely see them he soon found that he was completely surrounded by the barely visible ice crystals that formed around him like a dense fog.

"You're telling me that all this is your Artifact?" asked Iuli as he then realized that the shattered fragments was her true Artifact. The fragments of her sword looked like powdered snow that moved through the air like shattered ice as well as falling flower petals.



"Haha, I see, this really is 'Diamond Dust,' huh," said Iuli as the fragments drifted through the air, reflected the sunlight it received and giving off a strange light in return. Within the center of this faint, fragile light was the commanding visage of Kudoin Yukiha who looked like a goddess of war.

“Beautiful,” said Iuli, letting the words pass his lips without even meaning to.

“Indeed. As far as how it looks are concerned, I like it as well. Many people call it beau-”

“That’s not what I meant. I meant you.”

“Ah! The-There you go again!” retorted Yukiha, whose shoulders shook in anger but soon, regained her composure after taking a deep breath. Now ready for battle there was no doubt that she would not be swayed by his words again.

“Even if it looks beautiful you must not let your guard down. Contrary to its beauty, ‘Diamond Dust’ is an exceedingly brutal magic weapon.”

“You mean like ‘every rose has its thorns’?”

“Exactly,” answered Yukiha as she took up her stance with her slender sword, the countless ice crystals then starting to revolve around her.

“Here I come,” said Yukiha as she raised her sword and swung it down. With this, the blades of ice followed the sword’s path right to Iuli and assaulted him like a wall of ice. Kudoin Yukiha was strong. Her being ranked 1st at Seishun Academy wasn’t just for show.

Ever since she was young she had shown signs of being as brilliant as any mage and by the time she joined the middle school section she had acquired all the points she needed to become an A-Rank mage. Right as she entered into the high school section she took part in the ranking matches and had virtually no trouble in attaining the highest score. As a result, she was able to accomplish something that most first years could never hope to accomplish: gaining the rank of 1st. To all she was the most beautiful fighting mage, “Persephone.” Such was how everyone referred to her now that she was 1st in the academy. What with her specializing in ice and snow magic it was probably for that very reason that her Artifact, “Diamond Dust,” greatly resembled falling snow on a winter’s day. The fragments that drifted through the air, that were both both metallic and ice in nature, could be both controlled by her as well as used for both offense and defense as well. These devilish fragments that filled the air could cut through flesh with a single touch. If

she had them converge she would be able to create a vortex that no one would be able to escape from. Kudoin Yukiha was strong, but:

“I can’t help but smile,” thought Iuli for though she was strong he was even stronger than her. His strength was so immense that the idea of comparing his to hers would be nothing short of absurd.

“Let’s just see how you will dodge my blades,” thought Yukiha. Being a universal and very powerful weapon, “Diamond Dust” was capable of attacking from all angles if its wielder so wished it. It was able to chop up its targets as well as “isolate” its targets so they wouldn’t be able to move a single inch. To Yukiha she was strong but conceited as a result as well. She thought that regardless who it was, even if it was Asagami Iuli, that he would not be able to dodge her blades. Now that she knew of his ridiculous strength she thought that, if she fought him at her best, she was sure to at least scratch him once or twice. However, this was just conceitedness on her part. Against someone like Asagami Iuli, who was “irrationality” incarnate, she did nothing but underestimate him.

“It can’t be, I did not expect him to not dodge them at all,” Yukiha thought to herself. Against a weapon he could not hope to dodge and that could attack him from all angles the decision he made then was: to walk. Despite being in the midst of what seemed like a raging storm of destruction Iuli walked right out of it, calmly and without any sense of urgency whatsoever, just shaking off the blades as he walked. Although she had made her ice crystals descend upon him at all sorts of angles there was something that was just off.

“I am certainly feeling something,” thought Yukiha, “each one was certainly a direct hit, but... They had no effect on him at all? Just how strong are his defenses?” By using one’s mana, one is able to strengthen their defenses. Most all mages use this skill on reflex. It is a primordial power that wasn’t even magic. That was simply all that he was using and, in so doing, negated all of Yukiha’s attacks.

“Haa!” exclaimed Yukiha as she quickly had her ice crystals all converge on a single point. Her rationale was that if he was just going to dodge an attack like that then she might as well use a big attack that had a lot of openings in it. With a quiver of her slender sword, the ice crystals began to swirl around the tip of it. The ice crystals then formed a helix around it as well as started to revolve at incredible speeds. She had her blades rotate at faster and faster speeds in order to sharpen them and more of her power began to accumulate in its center. At the same time she

thrust her sword out and made her “Javelin” from countless ice crystals so too did they also start spinning like a drill. It was then as this was still going on that the javelin then headed straight for Iuli.

An abnormal sound could then be heard. In the instant the javelin made contact with his stomach all the blades that were brought together were then forcibly broken apart. It was almost as if it came into contact with something abnormally hard. The boy had sustained no damage and his walk was not hampered by it at all.

“Kuu,” grunted Yukiha as she contorted her face but was quick in making her next attack. She then focused her mana into the very core of her slender sword, the very heart of her magic implement, and started forming a magic circle.

“Come forth! Frost Pillars,!” It was a Fourth Level Ice and Snow Magic called, “Ice Coffin.” From the base of Yukiha’s feet came columns of frost that shot out of the ground and headed straight for Iuli, eroding everything in its path. Anyone who touched these frost pillars as they crawled across the ground will find themselves frozen in ice in an instant. Iuli, on the other hand, wasn’t daunted by this in the slightest and continued walking on. A frost pillar then sprung forth from the stone slab and hit his right foot. In that instant, the boy’s body was completely encased in a coffin of ice.

“Concentrate,” thought Yukiha to herself as she then started condensing her mana. Now that it was condensed, she then used it to increase the density of the ice, make it as cold as she possibly could and then went about making a mountainous prison of ice. However:

“Wha-?!” panicked Yukiha as she saw the ice cracking. The mountain of ice did not last even a second as it started to collapse. Iuli was still walking as though nothing had gotten in his way.

“So that was no good either, hm.” It was all so absurd and all very irregular. Yukiha then found herself looking back to the day she fought the black dragon that was Lucia’s pet. She may not have been a match for an upper level magic being like a dragon but she thought that if she fought with no consideration for her own life that she would at least be able to kill the dragon along with herself. Even if she was backed into a corner there was at least a faint hope she could fall back on. However, it was completely different now. There was no hope at all. If anything there was

nothing but despair. The very embodiment of despair was closing on her with every step. That being said, though, she did not feel threatened by him at all. He was as peaceful as a gentle breeze which, on the contrary, gave him a very eerie vibe.

“Kuu... Stop,” commanded Yukiha as she waved her slender sword like a conductor’s baton and all the ice fragments in the air struck down upon him and attempt to cut him apart. However, regardless of her attack, he could not stop him from walking towards her.

“Stop!”

“Yukiha, you get it now, don’t you?” Before she knew it, Iuli had closed the distance between them.

“Let’s wrap this up already. I’m not good with the cold,” said the boy in front of her as he acted as casually as he always did. He had no intention of fighting her and yet was able to defend himself against each and every one of her attacks. Her true abilities were not enough to even make him break out in a cold sweat. This very truth left a blemish on her pride as a warrior.

“I’m going to hit you. You better prepare yourself,” said Iuli as he declared what he was going to do next and pulled back his hand. Ignoring the ice that was on his body and extended his arm as the ice on him cracked.

“I don’t like that composure of yours!” Thought Yukiha from the bottom of her heart as her feelings of being unable to stand this situation began to swell within her.

“Hm? Hu-Huh?” said Iuli, looking surprised as he found his outstretched arm shaking the air and the image of the girl in front of him, Kudoin Yukiha, start to warp and become misshapen.

“That’s a mirror image,” said Yukiha. Combining the metal and ice properties of her sword she was able to refract the sun’s light, diffuse reflect it and bring about optical illusions within the atmosphere. What stood before Iuli right now was nothing more than an illusion, a mirror image of her. The true Yukiha was right behind him. She then poured as much mana as she could muster into her slender sword and the ice fragments surrounding her. She would not wait for her opponent to turn around. She would hit him from behind with everything she had.

“Oh king of the ocean, oh fanged beast of demonic ice, use your ruthless fangs to devour him whole!” In that instant, countless pillars of ice appeared in the air as well as countless pillars of frost appeared out of the ground. A second later, a gigantic block of ice harboring a piercing light then appeared. Ice spears that filled the sky appeared that formed an upper jaw appeared. A lower jaw of ice spears that formed a lower jaw appeared on the ground as well resulting in a mouth made of ice. The mouth was just so large that when it started to open it made Iuli image of the giant monsters that appeared in mythology. This was a Sixth Level Ice and Snow Magic known as “Leviathan.” It was a large-scale annihilation magic that required vast amounts of mana as well as precise control. Once the prison of absolute zero closed everything inside it would be broken to pieces.

“Close,” Yukiha screamed as she swung her slender sword down and, acting in accordance with her words, the mouth of ice began to move. The pillars of ice began to come down from the sky and the pillars of frost began to rise up almost like a giant beast closing its mouth. The many spears of ice were forming burying themselves into their target’s flesh with a chomp. It was almost like some extravagant chandelier had come crashing down. Now all that filled the air were small, solemn sounds.

“Haa, haa,” panted Yukiha as she finished making her strongest attack and found herself wheezing. It was also because of the cold air that she created that her breathe had turned white.

“How about now, If not even this could damage you,” Yukiha thought to herself as she looked on expectant and nervous at the same time as she stared intently at her opponent.

“His body is-?!” Yukiha was surprised to find that Iuli was not suffering from her attack and started looking around in a panic.

Impossible! This can’t be... All of my attacks should have hit him. Are you saying that was not his main body?!” In the grips of shock, despair and fear Yukiha racked her brain trying to figure out what had happened. It was then that she finally realized that something was off.

“Hold on, it did hit you!” she exclaimed as she saw that she had hit his main body.

“Haahaahaa, it took you long enough,” said Iuli in a teasing laugh that echoed all the way to where the large-scale annihilation magic was cast.

“As I thought, you are unharmed.”

“I’m not unharmed at all. I was just about to get frostbite... I also kind of feel like... I’ll freeze to death. My snot’s coming out, too.” Emerging from an opening in the chunk of ice came out Iuli who could be seen holding his shoulders as though cold and trying to suck up his snot that was trying to get out. Apparently a space of absolute zero only amounted to this much for him.

“Aah, it’s no good. I can’t take it anymore. I need to warm myself up,” said Iuli as he brought out his student I.D. from his pocket as his teeth were chattering, the student I.D. that also acted as a magic implement.

“I thought you couldn’t use magic.”

“I can barely use it... But well, I’ve been desperately trying to during practice and it’s just recently started to take shape.” Iuli then focused his mana into his student I.D. and some sort of magic was then activated. A magic circle then appeared and right after that an intense heat came from his student I.D. that was hot enough to pierce Yukiha’s body.

“Kuu!” What followed next was a pillar of flame that seemed to explode into life from around Iuli. The heat alone from this roaring flame was enough to melt all of Yukiha’s ice in an instant. What’s more, it was not only the ice but the stone slab that was their battlefield began to melt as well. It was a scorching torrent of flame that did not look like it was going to go out anytime soon. In the blink of an eye, their battlefield of extreme cold was transformed into a blazing inferno.

“I-It can’t be. He melted the ice that was made from my sixth level spell in an instant?!” Yukiha thought to herself. Compared to regular ice, ice made from magic was on a completely different level of strength. If he was able to melt something like that in an instant that meant:

“He must have used a sixth level... No, a seventh level flame magic!” Elemental magic was divided into seven levels that was based on the spell’s ease of use, power as well as scale. Seventh level magic was by far the most difficult to use so the Knight Squad deemed it a forbidden spell level to cast. The level of destruction

brought about by them was of course extreme and they caused a heavy strain on the caster as well. Ultimately, though, these brilliant flames did not reach Iuli was probably maintaining how far it would go. All she could feel was the unnaturally high temperature of the flames.

“This heat... There is no doubt about it, this is-” Yukiha thought to herself as she figured out what magic he used. It was a Seventh Level Flame Magic known as “Muspellheimr.” It was the flame of beginning capable of turning all creation to ash. It was a legendary spell that only existed within books. Even in the current Knight Squad there was not one person who could use such a spell. It was the most forbidden of forbidden spells.

“Owha, said Iuli as he raised his voice and all the flames surrounding him suddenly vanished leaving only the stone slab that had been warped and melted by the flames.



“Aw man, I did it again. I broke it,” said Iuli causing Yukiha to look closely at his student I.D. and found that it had a crack in it.

“This always happens when I put a little too much mana in.”

“That’s because the student I.D. is a magic implement made for beginners. It can only withstand magic up to level 4,” explained Yukiha as she was watching him.

“Why you, how dare you fool me like that.”

“Huh? What do you mean?”

“Don’t try to pretend you don’t know. That spell was ‘Muspellheimr,’ wasn’t it? Just how are you bad at magic? Did you really think I would still believe such a lie after you used a seventh level spell?!” Yukiha yelled at him fiercely but Iuli only laughed in response

“Hm? Aah... Ahaha. Oh, no, you’ve got it all wrong.”

“What?” said Yukiha, bewildered, as Iuli then went on to flatly say:

“That was ‘Fire’ I used just now.” Yukiha was dumbfounded. He used “Fire.” A First Level Flame Magic that was taught as one of the first, and most basic, of spells at the academy. Though it is a spell that anyone can activate its power is exceedingly weak.

“This is the one spell I can use right now. If I don’t concentrate really hard I won’t be able to use it and it only works like one out of three tries,” continued Iuli, feeling awkward about the whole thing.

“Haaa, and I just had to break it again. I also broke last week when I was practicing on my own... Wait a sec, ah! This is the dream world, isn’t it! Phew, looks like I was worried for nothing,” said Iuli, overjoyed, while Yukiha was just at a loss for words.

“The power of a spell can certainly change depending on the caster,” Yukiha thought to herself. Depending on the amount of mana used, the structure of the magic circle as well as the magic implement being used the power of a spell is bound to change. Just like Yukiha used ice fragments made by her Artifact to

increase her offensive abilities there are many who arrange their magic in such a way to suit their needs. However, she had never heard of anyone using a level 1 spell that looked so much like a level 7 one.

“Just... how much mana does he have? Just how pure is it?” Yukiha contemplated to herself.

“Hmmm, I don’t really get what’s going on, but said Iuli whose voice echoed all the way to her ears which caused Yukiha to come to her senses.

“You’re wide open, you know?” Yukiha did not know when it happened but Iuli, who had been quite some feet away before, was now standing right beside her. This being the case Yukiha then reflexively took on a defensive stance guarding all her vital points however it proved to be useless.

“And a 1, 2... 3, with a swoosh, Iuli thrust the space in front of Yukiha with incredible speed with his open palm. What soon followed then was a wall of air that Yukiha had no means of defending against.

“Uaaaaaah!” Wind pressure. It was not magic or anything else. It was simply a wind that was brought about by his thrust that sent Yukiha flying a great distance. It was with this, and only this, that Iuli ended the match without harming a single hair on her. She had fallen off the stone slab and, as was the rule that the two of them had agreed to, Iuli was the winner.

“Da-Damn,” thought Yukiha, frustrated. She had thought of using “Step” to get her back on the stone slab but decided against it. Yukiha had used up all her moves. Had she even returned to the fighting platform there would not have been anything more she could have done. Flying through the air, she accepted her loss and closed her eyes. Prepared for hitting the ground, at the height from which she was descending the damage she would have received would not have been great. However, instead of a harsh impact like she had expected, she found herself landing on something far softer.

“Ah. Oh crap. I ended up saving you.”

“Eh? Wha-?! Huh?!” After opening her eyes, she then realized that Iuli had caught her and was now in his arms. He had moved faster than she was flying through the

air and had caught her before she had fallen. He caught her with his feet firmly planted the ground and held her in his arms like a princess again.

“Wha- Ah... Just what do you think you are doing?!”

“Aw man... Crap, my feet hit the ground first so I guess it’s my loss, huh.”

“Wha-Whatever the case may be just put me down!” demanded Yukiha her face turned a bright red and started to struggle to which Iuli gently placed her down to the ground in response.

“Why did you save me? I am a mage, you know. Even if I fell from that height and that speed I would not have been damaged in the slightest. I had even prepared myself for the impact.” What’s more, they were in “Space.” No matter how hurt one may become the injuries they sustain there would not carry over into the real world.

“Aah, well, that maybe so... And I did think of that when I sent you flying, but,” Iuli went on to say with a bitter smile on his face.

“It just seems that my body ended up moving on its own.” Yukiha was at a loss. She just did not know what to say.

“Haaaa, so I lost. Damn,” said Iuli who, although took the match seriously, was depressed over having lost. After seeing Iuli like this, Yukiha could not help but grind her teeth a little. Though she was grateful that he was so kind and considerate to her she found herself being more irritated than anything else. It was here that her fighting spirit then slipped out and she said:

“Fight me seriously, Asagami Iuli.”

“Huh? Isn’t the match over? I did lose and all.”

“If you wish to be insistent on that point then so be it. If such is the case then the one who lost has to listen to an order by the one who won,” Yukiha then went on to say. In her heart there was nothing but the desire for strength. She felt angry at his holding back against her and irritated at her own powerlessness. However these feelings were greatly eclipsed by her feelings of pure curiosity that was also present within her heart. As both a mage and as well as one who lives for battle, she wanted to see the sheer depths of this monster that stood before her.

“You want me to fight you seriously? That would mean getting serious in a lot of ways, you know. I wasn’t planning on holding back against you. I was really serious about my fight. When Yukiha heard about his fight she was sure he meant that he would see his beliefs and pride through their fight.

“Spare me your pretentious talk,” said Yukiha as she brushed his words aside.

“I am telling you to show me your full strength,” Yukiha continued on, her eyes becoming even more intense than before. For a time Iuli bunched up his eyebrows as though he was troubled but being unable to refuse her any longer he let out a sigh and finally caved in to her.

“Guess I’ve got no choice then,” Iuli then went on to say as he kicked off the ground and distanced himself from Yukiha.

“Well, it will only be a little, but I will fight you seriously,” said Iuli. Despite what he had said Iuli looked at Yukiha with a piercing gaze.

“Don’t lose focus for even a second. Focus, because if you don’t there won’t be any second chances.” It was because of how frighteningly serious his gaze was that Yukiha knew instinctively that he did not mean it as a threat. As Yukiha stood at the ready for their fight Iuli then put his hand to his choker.

“If I take this off Seria’s going to be really mad, huh. Ah, but, this is the dream world, isn’t it, so Seria probably won’t even notice it.”

“Does that choker have some sort of spell cast onto it?”

“This is a special choker that master made for me. It doesn’t really have anything cast on it but, well, I guess you could say it works like Lucia’s tattoo,” said Iuli as he was trying to find the words to answer her.

“This is a cursed item that suppresses the mana of whoever wears it to their very limits.” Yukiha just could not understand what he was saying.

“Suppress to their limits?” Ever since Yukiha first met him he was always wearing that choker. He would even wear it to sleep and after thinking for a while she realized that she had never seen him without it on.

“Wait a minute... It can’t be, so in essence... All those things he did was with the choker on?” thought Yukiha to herself. Though she was confused to the point she had to look away, Iuli then went on to say, “well, here I go.” Iuli then, in a truly casual way, went about taking off his choker.

“Hhn?! Aaaaaaaah?!” His power erupted. His mana came bursting out like a fountain. Incredible amounts of mana then came gushing out of his body. The vast amounts of mana, as well as the horrifying quality of it, then went on to his surroundings and started devastating the landscape. The mana he let forth as well as the very pressure of it prevented Yukiha from standing and caused her to fall to her knees.

“Just... Just what is this mana?!” Yukiha screamed in her mind. The tremendous amount of pure mana was filling up the entire space they were in. It was an eerie mass of pure power. The air itself became heavier and Yukiha felt that gravity itself had increased as well. She was overwhelmed just by watching this and felt that her very core was being violated by the mana.

“Upuu,” Yukiha could barely stand it. A feeling as though she was going to throw up welled up inside her. The mana was just that sinister and offensive. It was here that she truly understood just what he meant by “don’t lose your focus.” Had she not focused her mana she probably would have passed out just from trying to resist it.

“Magic Energy”

What stood before her was nothing but “Magic Energy” cloaked in human skin. There was nothing impure about it. It was “Magic Energy.” Nothing more, nothing less, it ignored all such things as common sense and laws of nature. It was a force all its own. Among all the kinds of mana she had felt before this mana was much stronger, fiercer, crueller and more savage. Just facing it made her feel like her spirit would shatter.

“So this is why he never got serious,” thought Yukiha, “All this mana would cause any normal mage’s head to burst. As she focused all her mana to oppress Iuli’s she then heard an echo that sounded like something was cracking.

“Wha-What was that?” said Yukiha. Looking up, Yukiha saw that the sky was cracking. A fissure was running across the great blue sky and all she could see underneath it was a black of the darkest pitch.

“It can’t be, is this dimension being torn apart?!” The fissure continued to grow larger and the sound of creaking could then be heard from other places as well.

“Whoa, what’s going on? Things are getting dicey.” Sensing that there was something wrong with the space he and Yukiha were in he calmed down his mana and put his choker back on. The mana that had surrounded them and filled the room then vanished as though it were never there to begin with and Yukiha was freed from the pressure. The fissure in the sky also stopped growing and began to close up more and more.

“What’s the deal? For a dream world it’s not that great at all, huh.” This dimension known as “Space” was made by magic and is a completely different dimension from the Demon and Human Worlds. It was precisely because it was a fantasy world that it was referred to as a place where no matter how much destruction or what disasters took place it would not cross over to the real world. At least, that would have been the case if not for Iuli. He was dangerously close to causing the dimension to collapse on itself. Even transcend it. All of this was because he, a single human, unleashed his mana.

“Are you telling me that it could not withstand it? That it was because of his mana that the dimension itself was almost...” Yukiha found herself gulping at the very prospect of it.

“So this is Asagami Iuli’s... Power,” she concluded to herself.

“Sheesh,” replied Iuli who then went on to say in a very nonchalant way, “and I hadn’t even gotten close to showing off half my power yet.” Yukiha was just at a complete loss for words. She was utterly shocked to hear him say such a thing. So much so that for a time she could not even bring her own self to get up. Finished with their match in “Space” they then headed home. This time, however, Iuli carried her in his arms. Seeing them walk like this as they were heading to the girl’s dorm one couldn’t help but think they were a couple.

“I think this is the third time I’ve carried you like this.”

“Shu-Shut up! Do-Don’t say something so embarrassing!” said Yukiha as she then glared at him from within his arms but this only served to make him laugh.

“Aah, how pathetic,” thought Yukiha. The reason why she was being carried was exceedingly simple: she lost strength in her legs. It was because she came into contact with his extraordinary mana that she found that she couldn’t find the strength to move her body. Though they were inside “Space” where she shouldn’t have suffered any effects, once she was back in the real world this time, however, her body was in just as poor a condition as before. She was sure that she would get better in time but for now she was in no condition to walk.

“Um, Iuli... About how you carry me, Couldn’t you carry me in any other way?”

“Hm? What, you wanted to ride on my shoulders?”

“Why does it have to be on your shoulders? Please just carry me normally!”

“Piggyback, huh. That’s not bad, either. You get to feel a girl’s chest pressed right up against you and-“

“On second thought, this is fine.”

“Oh, okay. I knew it, it makes you happy when you’re carried like this, huh?”

“Sure, let us just go with that. Either way please hurry and get me to the girl’s dorm as soon as possible before someone sees-“ Yukiha went on to say but then covered her face in a panic as though she were embarrassed. There was someone standing in their path.

“Just what do you think you’re doing here flirting, Kudoin? Huh?” Almost as if she were foretelling the future, someone had seen them. What’s more, this someone had a strong build and scary face. The one who showed up was Sagai Seigen as well as a few members of his entourage. Having to be reunited with someone she didn’t like once more caused Yukiha to make a face that showed that she had had enough of him.

“Heh, so the high and mighty first rank has time to be messing around with a guy. Guess this means you’re just that confident you will win the next ranking matches,

huh... Hm?" said Seigen as he then found himself squinting with his eyes and glaring at Iuli.

"That choker... You're that guy!"

"Ah, you're right! You're that freshman brat who acted all disrespectful to Seigen-san that one time!" Everyone then started looking on and yelling but Iuli went on to say:

"Oi, Yukiha, who are these guys?" It seemed that he couldn't remember them at all. Though shocked that he didn't know them, Yukiha then explained to him who they were:

"That is Sagai Seigen as well as his friends. I heard that you had a fight with him a few days."

"Oh, right, I guess he was there, huh. I remember now. Uuuh, I think he was a pretty strong guy." After being unable to bear their whispering back and forth to each other Seigen then broke his silence to get him back into the conversation:

"Oi, freshman, why is someone like you with Kudoin?"

"Huh? I don't really know what to say when you put it like that... I just felt like it."

"What's your rank?"

"D," answered Iuli, telling the truth as though he really couldn't care either way. Though shocked to hear this, they all started to laugh a few seconds later.

"Gyahahahahahaha."

"D-Rank? You're a D-Rank? You're telling me we had a guy like that in our high school? Hyahahaha," they went on to say as they looked down on him with everything they had and sneered at him in a vulgar way.

"Oi, Yukiha. It seems like they're laughing at me."

"Of course they are you fool."

“Ahahahaha, haa, I see. So the failure of a transfer student is getting lessons from the ever capable Kudoin, huh. Oioi, if you act all confident like that you’re gonna end up tripping, you know? I’m looking forward to the next ranking matches.” After hearing this and Seigen’s complete misreading of the situation Yukiha then let out a sigh.

“A failure of a transfer student, you say? If that is so then I am sure you are just jumping for joy.”

“Huh?”

“It’s nothing, Sagai-senpai. It’s just that I have had enough of you,” Yukiha continued with some cold words and then asked Iuli to put her down.

“Hm? Can you walk already?”

“Yes.” Iuli then gently stood her up.

“Sagai-senpai, if the first rank is what you want then allow me to just say this: I am much stronger than I- Uhyaaaaa!” Just as she was delivering her speech it then got cut off in the middle with a rather idiotic scream. She wasn’t able to put any strength into her legs and so ended up collapsing right then and there. Iuli then reflexively grabbed the hem of her clothes and clung to her, the both of them looking utterly stupid.

Curses for all the times for me to lose strength in my legs.

“Hahaha, don’t push yourself. You’re still weak in the knees, right?”

“Shu-Shut up! This is entirely your fault in the first place!” It was with this comment that there was a noticeable change in the coloring of Seigen’s and his entourage’s faces.

“Are you serious? That rumor about you getting it on with a guy was true?”

“I bet they’ve been doing it here at school, Haha, just really living it up.” From what she was hearing, even Yukiha could tell that they were talking about something crass.

“Yo-You’re wrong! I-I-I was just-“ Yukiha then felt Iuli pat her on the head and saw him step forward.

“Sooo, senpai, just what do you want with Yukiha?”

“Nothing, I just thought I’d warn a certain someone about getting too cocky.”

“Are you really that miffed that you lost to a girl?”

“Huh?”

“Hahaa, you’re a really small man, huh? So what if you lost to a girl? A guy shouldn’t even be beating a girl anyway.”

“You bastard, don’t you get cocky with me,” said Seigen as his stare became even more intense but this didn’t bother Iuli at all.

“To begin with, a fight between you two wouldn’t even be a contest,” said Seigen with a pained smile on his face as he was trying to come up with a retort.

“So what if Yukiha is ranked first in the academy? It’s just a title that doesn’t mean anything and even now she’s trying to go even higher. And yet look at you. Getting all bitter over one match and the fact you didn’t get some glory. How do I say it... She’s in a whole other class.”

“Iuli,” said Yukiha as she clenched her fist against her chest as she looked on at his back as he was defending her.

“Why you! Don’t you talk back to me you lowly D-Rank!” bellowed Seigen as he then seized Iuli by the collar.

“Now, now, let’s just take it easy, senpai. We are at this magic school and all so what how about we settle it with this?” replied Iuli in his usual aloof, conceited way as he pulled out his student I.D. from his pocket.

“Yukiha’s really tired right now so I’ll take her place. A D-Rank like me is more than enough for you.”

“Oi, Iuli, what are you doing?”

“Hm? Isn’t it obvious?”

“Fights among students are forbidden.”

“You really are a stickler for rules, huh. Don’t worry, I’ll end it quick.” All of them then went behind the academy where no one would see them. Yukiha, having recovered enough to at least stand, then went to Iuli to say:

“To begin with, a fight between you and him is no contest, isn’t it?”

“Don’t worry about it. I’ll be sure to face him head on,” answered Iuli as the light flickered off of his student I.D. Though he had broken his student I.D. earlier that was the one he had broken in “Space” so the one he had in reality was still intact.

“You don’t mean... to say that you will use ‘Fire’ like you did earlier, are you? If you use such a powerful spell in a place like this No, considering what it is it wouldn’t be considered a powerful spell, but if you use it-“

“Yeah, yeah, like I said, don’t worry about it. I’ll do a good job of it. I don’t really get what his deal is but if a D-Rank like me takes him down a few notches then don’t you think he’ll mellow out a bit?” The two of them continued to whisper on to each other until:

“Oi, just how long are you two going to keep up with the chitchat?!” yelled Seigen, irritated.

“Yeah, yeah, I’m coming now,” replied Iuli in a lazy way as he then stood himself before Seigen.

“Just what in the world is he intending to do?!” Yukiha thought to herself. If both of them were able to fight without any handicaps then Iuli was sure to win. She thought that Seigen’s Artifact would not be able to break through both Iuli’s offensive and defensive powers. However, once he brought out his student I.D. after saying that he was going to settle things she became unsure of what he was going to do.

“I’ll at least give you a handicap. I won’t use my Artifact,” stated Seigen as he made a restriction on himself without knowing the true ability of his opponent. He

then did not go for the Artifact that was on his hip but instead brought out his own student I.D.

“Just please be sure to not make any excuses when you lose, senpai,” retorted Iuli in a taunting way.

“Anyway, if I win, what say we make it so that you never go near Yukiha from now until doomsday? It really seems like she doesn’t like you and all.”

“Ha. Then if I win then you’ll never tag along with her again. Seeing a stupid D-Rank like you fawning after an honor student makes me sick.” As the two of them glared at each other and exchanged words, Yukiha then found herself thinking:

“Somehow, it feels like they are fighting over me... N-No, that’s not it at all! Just what am I thinking?!” Yukiha continued on as she then shook her head.

“And... Begin!” said one of Seigen’s entourage gave the signal to start and their fight then began. In an instant, Seigen started to move quickly as he then started to infuse the magic implement in his hand with mana. It was a fluid flow of mana. His rank of being 2nd in the academy was not just for show.

“Here! Take thiiiiis!” As far as what sort of magic Seigen had activated... No one would ever know. The reason being was because:

“Gareguaaaaaah?!” At the same time the starting signal was given he was sent flying a few meters to then make a splendid fall onto the lawn below. The momentum seemingly infinite, Seigen continued to roll across the lawn and collide into a large tree near the corner of the school building. Meanwhile his opponent, Iuli, had a smile on his face and the look of someone who just pitched a baseball.

“H-H-He threw it?!” panicked Yukiha in her mind. Iuli’s battle strategy was, very simply, the throwing of his school I.D. Once the starting signal was given he threw it with everything he had. Though it was used as a magic implement it had a decent mass to it. To then add Iuli’s own brute strength into throwing it made it a truly intimidating weapon. After taking a hit to his gut, there was no telling just how hurt Seigen was.

“Is that what he meant when he said he would settle things with his student I.D?!” Yukiha pondered to herself.

“All right, it’s my win!” Iuli stated. Seigen’s entourage was in a panic as they then rushed to his side. All the while Iuli was shaking his fists in the air, proud of his victory.

You fool, just how that is a win.

“Oooh, Yukiha, did you get to see me acting all brave? I won completely!”

“Just how was that a complete victory, especially after that surprise attack of yours?”

“They do say that ‘to fight is to deceive,’ so it’s his fault for falling for it. It’s not like I even lied in the first place.” Yukiha was just utterly befuddled by him and yet felt that she was on the verge of admiring him as well. She had seen him fight many times before and the only way she could describe his fighting style was reckless. It wasn’t just that he lived with reckless abandon but that he took everything at his own pace and even beyond that.

“Kuu- Wh-Why you... Little shiiiit!” said Seigen in a low, growling voice and looked furious as he glared at Iuli.

“You can stand? Not bad, senpai. I hit you pretty hard, too.”

“I am just going to let you know that Sagai-senpai is quite skilled. He has great physical abilities and in the instant just before you hit him he jumped back so as to not take on the full brunt of the blow.” Or in other words, a skilled mage was sent flying by someone who simply threw something at him and did not expect the one throwing it to be so strong. Iuli then shrugged his shoulders.

“You really don’t give up huh, senpai. I won so let’s just call this match over.”

“Shut up! You expect me to accept this?!” Seigen then shook every one of his friends’ hands off him and went for the baton-style Artifact that was at his waist.

One more time, and this time fight me seriously! This time it’s a fight to the death you fucking bastard!” announced Seigen in a hideous, angry voice as he drew his Artifact. The composure that he had before was all but gone and he was just seething with anger now.

“Sheesh, guess I just have to then, huh,” said Iuli as he let out a small sigh. In the instant that Seigen was about to activate his Artifact he heard a voice say, “How noisy,” that seemed to come from everywhere. It was a young boy’s voice but it was an awfully calm and dignified one. At the same time, the air seemed to change as well. Everyone there then felt their bodies stiffen. Even Seigen, who was enraged, then seemed to calm down his movements all but ceasing. All the bloodthirstiness he had been exuding earlier was completely gone as well, almost as if it had been swallowed up by something else. That very same bloodthirstiness was thick in the air and seemed to cloak his body.

“I will have you know you are being quite bothersome and it is because of you all that I am now completely awake,” said the voice again in a lethargic tone as a figure then descended from the tree that Seigen had just hit. He fell to the lawn below without making a sound and looked to be a young boy with a long black sword in hand. In addition, he had a young looking face and was short in stature. Based on his looks, it might have been more apt to call him a child than a young boy. This being said, however, the look in his eyes was exceedingly bad. The contrast between his face as well as the sharp glint in his eyes that gave the impression he would kill everything and everyone without a second thought was just unbelievable.

“Wha-?! Yo-You are- said Seigen as he and his entourage then trembled in fear of him.

“Just what is Io-san doing in a place like this?” wondered Yukiha to herself as she knew this boy very well. There probably was not any mage who did not know of him.

“Oi, Yukiha, who’s the shorty?”

“Kagihara Io-san. You have at least heard of him, haven’t you?”

“Nope, I haven’t,” answered Iuli to which Yukiha could not help but wonder if he truly was a mage.

“He is a member of ‘Seventh Heaven,’” Yukiha explained and it was after hearing this that Iuli’s eyes shot right open.

“It looks as though you do know of Seventh Heaven, at least.”

“Yeah, I don’t know their members but if I remember right... They’re a group of the strongest mages that have been given permission to fight magic beings, right?”

The group Seventh Heaven, among all the chosen S-Rank mages they are seven of the strongest and are living, breathing weapons. They possess unheard of fighting abilities and for those who have been allowed to bear the name of Seventh Heaven will be awarded the use of a Raven Artifact as well as a fitting title.

“Well this is a surprise. So that runt’s in Seventh Heaven, huh.”

“Io-san is a prodigy who just about a year ago joined Seventh Heaven at the age of 12. He is the youngest member in all of Seventh Heaven’s history and quite an uproar it was when he joined. Though he is technically a member of this academy’s middle school he is already fighting on the front lines.”

“Hmmm, wait, huh? Didn’t you say that you could only join the Gouma Knight Squad after you graduated?”

“I told you, didn’t I? There are exceptions and Io-san happens to be one of them.”

“Ah, oh yeah, you did say that there was someone like that, huh. So he was the one who joined the Knight Squad while he was still at the academy. I see now.”

Kagihara Io had joined the Gouma Knight Squad at the young age of ten and was already an accomplished mage before he had even joined. Though a genius and maverick he has also been referred to as the accursed child as well as demon child but has fearsome skills and talent. What’s more, he was what Yukiha sought to obtain.

“No, I suppose he would be more of a precedent than a goal, wouldn’t he,” thought Yukiha as she corrected herself. If she had extraordinary skills and talent then it would be possible for her to join the Knight Squad without having to wait for graduation, as could be attested to the precedent that was Kagihara Io.

“So you were the ones who were making all this noise. Hmmm, I feel like I’ve seen your face before,” said Io as he glared at Seigen. Though he was naturally short so he had to look up but his calm and self-possessed manner as he looked on contemptuously at them made it seem like he were a king speaking to his retainers.

“Ah... M-My name is Sagai Seigen and I am a senior in the high school section.” Despite his talking to someone who was younger than him Seigen spoke quite humbly towards him. There was not a trace of his violent anger left to be seen. Before the boy that stood before him, he was humble. His indomitable aura and his being a member of Seventh Heaven carried that much weight.

“My ranking in the academy ... was 1st up until last year... an-and I may have ended up in 2nd for now but in the next ranking matches I will-“

“I could not care less,” replied Io as he kicked Seigen who was trying to make himself look good in front of him.

“I have no interest in your name or your titles. More importantly, I just heard my favorite words.”

“Favorite words?”

“A fight to the death,” stated Io as the corners of his mouth curved slightly upward to make a faint smile. He then brandished his long sword that was much longer than he was tall and readied his stance. His wielding a Raven Artifact was proof that he was a member of Seventh Heaven.

“I was just getting bored as well. If it is an opponent in a death match that you want then I will fulfill that role. You are not telling me that you would say such words and not be resolved to risk your life, are you?” Seigen shrieked and then took a step back. However, Io stepped one foot closer in return.

“If you are a mage then prove that you are what you said you were!” Io’s clear killing intent gave off its own kind of pressure that assailed Seigen.

“Spa-Spa-Spare meee!” screamed Seigen in an unsightly way as he and his entourage ran away.

“What? How boring,” remarked Io as he spat out of sheer boredom and rested his long sword on his shoulder.

“I see that you have not changed at all, Io-san.”

“You know him, Yukiha?”

“He is famous after all. In all of history there was not one mage who could stand against Witches on their own until he came along. In addition, our families have some history together as well.” While Kagihara Io was known as many things and boasted incredible fighting capabilities he was a prodigy, an accursed child but at the same time a problem child as well. If one was to put it simply: he was mad about fighting. If ever there was a fight he would slaughter his enemies turning the battlefield into a bloodbath and overrun them all until no one was left as he sported a demonic grin that stretched from ear to ear. He was someone who loved combat more than anyone and combat loved him back in return. For someone like him when he joined the Knight Squad the title he was given was “The Gorger.”

“The one standing there is... Kudoin Yukiha, hm. It’s been a while,” replied Io-san as he realized where the voice was coming from and so headed to where they were.

“It certainly has, Io-san,” replied Yukiha as she addressed him with respect while he, in contrast, looked down on her.

“I see, I remember now. That man just now was the one you won against in last year’s ranking matches.”

“Yes. He is currently ranked 2nd in the academy.”

“So a man such as him is ranked 2nd, hm. It seems that the academy’s standards have dropped quite a bit.”

“It is quite unfortunate.”

“Now then, Kudoin Yukiha, who is this foolish looking man you have with you?” asked Io as he had his eyes, and only his eyes, look up at Iuli.

“This is-“

“Huh? Who are you calling foolish looking you little shorty?” retorted Iuli, objecting to being called such a thing. Yukiha, meanwhile, looked on at Iuli with her eyes wide open.

“Listening to you this past while I see that you’re one cheeky little brat, huh. I don’t care if you’re history’s youngest member of Seventh Heaven or whoever you are, but-“

“Sto-Stop it, Iuli!”



“The same could be said about you, Yukiha. Why are you talking so formally to a runt like this?”

“H-He is on a completely different level than us... Wha-Whatever the case, you have to apologize to him!”

“Heck no, I hate cocky disrespectful brats like him who everyone has to respect.”

“Just what are you saying?! You just disrespected your senior by sending him flying with your student I.D. not too long ago!”

“Oh, you’re right,” said Iuli with an expression on his face saying that she got him there.

“Haahaahaa, haa, I see. It’s pretty frustrating being done in by someone younger, huh. I now know how that senpai from earlier really feels. I’ll be sure to be more careful from now on,” said Iuli as he let a nonchalant smile show on his face. Yukiha looking like the very definition of uncomfortable in the meantime.

“Calm yourself, Kudoin Yukiha. Do not let your voice become so unsettled,” said Io in a quiet tone.

“The chattering of simpletons does not reach my ears at all.”

“Huh, Oi who are you calling a simpleton.”

“It is true that I am a shorty. My stature is small. However it does not bother me in the slightest because height does not determine strength,” Io then went on to say.

“I will settle for one eyeball then,” Yukiha then heard him say from what sounded like above her. It wasn’t until a tenth of a second later that she realized that Io had disappeared from her sight. Her then realizing that he was on Iuli’s shoulders took another tenth of a second as well.

“This is... Warp,” The movement spell known as “Warp” was a spell that allowed one to jump through space. Though it is a subcategory of summoning magic it requires a large and complicated spell formula and is in itself an extremely high level technique that would take most normal mages ten seconds before they could activate the spell.

For Yukiha, who was the top of her academy and boasted the highest grades, she is able to perform the spell in about three seconds but it still wasn't good enough for her to use in actual combat. What's more, Yukiha was not even aware of the instant that Io had used it. He activated the spell in an instant and finished his movement just as quickly.

"I have never seen someone use 'Warp' so quietly and so quickly before," Yukiha thought to herself. There was not one ounce of wasted movement and he moved with unparalleled accuracy. It really was as if he had teleported, history's youngest member to join Seventh Heaven, Kagihara Io, also known as "The Gorger."

"Oh?" By the time Iuli had carelessly raised his voice Io had already finished his movement. Moving faster than lightning, he used his right hand in an attempt to gouge out Iuli's right eye. It was just when his nail was about to touch his eye that:

"Stop that, Io-kun," echoed a woman's voice and Io's movements stopped right then and there.

"Tsk, someone troublesome has showed up," remarked Io as he clicked his tongue and descended from Iuli's shoulders.

"Honestly, just what do you think you are doing, Io-kun? You have finally returned from your mission but instead of attending classes you are just out here wandering about," said a woman with slightly puffed up cheeks and saying what any good teacher would say. The woman in this case was Crowley Himitsu. She was both the headmaster of the academy as well as captain of the Gouma Knight Squad. In addition, she was a part of Seventh Heaven as well. The title she received was "The Disobeyer."

"Just what am I to learn in an academy such as this? Please just send me off to the Demon World already. That will prove to be far more educational for me."

"That won't do. I will have you learn common sense as well as how to cooperate with others at this academy. An exception has been made for you to join the Knight Squad but you are utterly helpless when it comes to matters outside of fighting."

"What of it?" replied Io sounding exceedingly bored?

“What else is there besides conflict in this rotten world?” Io then went on to say giving off a frighteningly sharp look in his eyes that no one would think a boy his age could make. Himitsu, however, let it slide and then smiled.

“There is quite a bit. There is love, friendship, and various sorts of things such as that.”

“How ridiculous,” Io replied as though he were spitting the words out and then left.

“Ah, wait right there! You have to be sure to apologize to Iuli-kun!” Himitsu called after him in a panic but he had already disappeared somewhere else.

“Honestly, what a troubling boy he is. Yukiha-san, Iuli-kun, I am sorry for the trouble he has caused you.”

“Not at all,” replied Yukiha.

“For crying out loud... He is always so brash that it is hard to keep him in line.”

“You think so? From my point of view you seemed to have a good handle on him.” Seeing how she treated such a pugnacious and savage boy who had incredible fighting skills like a cheeky child made Yukiha think of Crowley’s nickname, “People User.”

People around her referred to her as such both out of respect and out of disdain. While her fighting prowess was normal she had abilities that allowed her to be in full control of her subordinates and, along with her organizational management skills, was hired to become the captain of the Knight Squad at the age of 26.

Her being called such a thing as “People User” was a way of praising her abilities but was also meant in irony as it was tantamount to saying “that she was better at using people than magic.”

“It has been a while, hasn’t it, Iuli-kun. I believe it has been two weeks now,” said Himitsu as she called out to Iuli.

Yeah, we haven’t seen each other since we took care of my paperwork to transfer here.”

“Have you gotten used to the academy already?”

“Well, I’m getting there.”

“I am happy to hear that. However, your grades seem to be rather lacking at the moment.”

“Haahaahaa,” was Iuli’s reply as he forced himself to laugh off the whole thing. Crowley, on the other hand, just gave him a pained smile instead.

“That being said, if you are getting along well with our honor student Yukiha then I can rest easy. Please make a point of learning a great many things from her. Now then, if you will excuse me,” added Crowley as she nodded her head and left. Though she is the highest ranking person at the academy she was humble and, in a certain way, was the polar opposite of Io.

“You seemed to get along rather well with Captain Crowley.”

“Aah... Yeah. It seems that she used to know my master and it was because of his connection with her that I was able to get into this academy, but what about you? She seemed to know your name and face right off the bat. Was it because of you’re being 1st in the academy here?”

“That person remembers everyone and everything related to the Knight Squad.” Upon hearing this, Iuli whistled shortly to show that he was impressed.

“By the way, Iuli, is your eye okay?”

“Hm? What’s this? You worried about me?”

“Yo-You fool! I was just-“

“I’m all right. That shorty’s hand didn’t touch my eye at all, but,” Iuli then added, “he wasted no time in trying to gouge my eye out. He’s one freaky brat. He must have a pretty big complex about his height.”

“No, don’t you think it was simply because of your bad attitude?” Granted, Io himself was the only person who knows truly why he did what he did.

“Yeah, but even so, it’s amazing how that Captain Crowley was able to rein in that savage shorty like that,” Iuli went on to say and ended up forcing himself to laugh a little.

“This academy has a lot of weirdos in it, huh.”

“You are the absolute last person to be saying such a thing,” Yukiha retorted instantly.

In the near pitch black darkness there stood a single girl. It was the entrance to the special training area known as “Space.” Sneaking in without permission, the girl then put her pale hand to the door, closed her eyes, and it seemed as though she were searching for something. After a short while, she then opened her eyes and put her hand to the small communicator in her ear.

Professor, There is no mistaking it. There are traces that ‘Space’ had been damaged.”

“I see,” said a hoarse voice on the other end of the communicator.

“Do you think someone was testing a large-scale magic weapon inside here?”

“No, there is no possibility of that. Regardless of whatever the magic or magic weapon might be it is impossible to damage that dimension like that. More than likely it was an error on the academy’s part who was managing it.”

“It would seem that the dimension is already starting to repair itself. At this rate it will probably be back to what it was by tomorrow afternoon.”

“I see. If that is so then I suppose I will have you move on to your next assignment,” the professor’s voice then replied and the girl could not help but gulp after hearing this.

“It has been about two months since we sent you to that academy. I never would have thought a chance would come this quickly. However, if we miss it, there is no telling when we will get a second one. Do you think you can do it?” the professor went on to say.

“Yes. I can see that there is a slight tear in the Mystery Circle so as to repair ‘Space.’ If I go through there then there should be a path leading to the deepest parts of the academy.”

“Then I will have that be your next assignment. Make sure to stay on your guard. If you fail then you are nothing more than trash,” said the professor’s voice to which the girl nodded like an obedient puppet.

“In the name of ‘Witch Dystopia-sama.’”

“In the name of ‘Witch Dystopia-sama.’”

“I’m counting on you, number 846.”

“Right,” answered the girl, Tsuji Yashiro, briefly. Remaining expressionless and not showing any emotion whatsoever.

Chapter 6 – The Deepest Part of Seishun Academy

What with Crowley Himitsu serving as headmaster she was well aware that among all the training institutes Seishun Academy was an especially excellent one. When Kagihara Io said that “the academy’s standards have dropped quite a bit” he only meant to say that the academy grew unusually fast. As the academy plays an important role as the headquarters for the Japan branch of the Gouma Knight Squad it has a variety of some of the greatest equipment as well.

The greatest example of this would be the Mystery Circle drawn across the entire academy. Even among those involved with the academy only a select few know its workings. Hardly anyone knows the details about it however there are still people who are grateful that it is there. Just like a normal person can use a laptop and a smartphone without knowing how it works and still be grateful to science. The students of the academy also held the pioneers who made the Mystery Circle in high esteem even if they don’t have a firm grasp of its mechanism.

It was precisely for this very reason that the “truth” hidden inside the Mystery Circle was kept to an exceedingly small number of people of “that” which was placed in the deepest part of the academy.

Tsuji Yashiro was silent as she looked up at the wall in front of her. It was a cold looking barrier wall that had a geometric design drawn upon it. As it was underground one lost all sense of time because sunlight didn't reach down there. The area was not only forbidden to students but to teachers as well. There was no telling how long it would take to sneak in as well. Yashiro then placed her hand against the massive wall, analyzing the barrier's structure, and negating it. Within this girl that was "made" to come down to this space was any and every kind of tool and knowledge she needed to break a barrier.

That being said she did not have a tool that would allow her to unlock any door. If she had tried negating the barrier while the Mystery Circle was at full strength an emergency barrier would have taken its place just as quickly. This time, however, for "some reason or another," the Mystery Circle was impaired. What's more, the place that was impairing it was "Space." Of all the other places that could be damaged one would think that a perfectly separate world would be immune to such a thing. With such an unexpected and unprecedented occurrence like this it only goes without saying that the Knight Squad would be late in noticing or tending to it. To Yashiro, and to the organization that she belonged to, this was an opportunity that could not be missed.

"Open sesame," she then said indifferently, the words apparently having no particular meaning. She just felt like saying it at that place at that time. Yashiro then snuck through an opening in the wall and took a step inside. It was a room surrounded by a circular wall. Even though it was rather spacious it was a closed space that gave off a strange feeling of pressure. The space was like a temple as well as a jail. It was the lowest level under the academy, the deepest part as well as core of Seishun Academy.

"I found it." Yashiro started walking towards the very center or what was truly the very "heart" of the academy. Heading up some grey stairs that seemed to lead up to a kind of altar there was enshrined there in that spherical space... was a pitch black coffin.

"So this space and everything was made so as to protect this- No, so as to enshrine it," thought Yashiro as she looked around her surroundings and then back to the coffin.

"If everything is just as the professor predicted then inside is..." Yashiro then extended her hand and put it on the coffin. The coffin was not locked or sealed so

she was able to open it with a minimal amount of strength. She then put the lid aside and then looked on at the contents. It was a corpse missing its head. Inside the heavy box was a dried up mummy. Its hands, feet and torso were all withered and thin like dead branches. It looked as though it would break as soon as one touched it but it had a strange air about it as well. Despite it looking as though it was on the verge of rotting away and was all dried up it had exceedingly pure mana within.

“Professor, it’s here- No, I have come upon it,” Yashiro reported quietly as she put her hand to the communicator in her ear while looking down at the corpse of the Witch.

“I have found ‘Witch Dystopia-sama’s’ body.”

“Ooh... I see,” said the voice on the other side seemingly trembling with delight.

“It seems that my conjecture was right after all. So her body was there.”

“So this body in this coffin in this very room... Has all become one gigantic magic implement it would seem. So this is the source of the Mystery Circle’s power.” Magic beings who wield a great deal of power will, more often than not, not lose their magical properties even after death and will then be used as a magic implement. Among all of them those who boasted an enormous amount of mana make for the best energy sources for things like the Magic Circle. What is absolutely essential for making magic is the “brain” which governs the mind as well as the “heart” which is the source of magic. As both are exceedingly rare to get one’s hands on there are many cases where they are changed into weapons. One example would be the Raven Artifacts which are said to be the most powerful and are granted to members of Seventh Heaven. At their very cores are the hearts and brains of Witches.

“No matter where we looked we could never find the Black Witch’s body... So it was as I thought. The Knight Squad had kept it for safekeeping and made use of it... So the sudden increase in the Mystery Circle’s performance three years ago was because of this,” the professor said, his raspy voice being blurred between feelings of sorrow and rage.

“Number 846, you must bring that body outside as quickly as you can. Just knowing that Black Witch-sama is under the Gouma Knight Squads management disgusts me to no end.”

“But professor,” Yashiro then went on to say, “the head is missing.”

“What’s that?”

“The head has been severed at the neck.”

“Hmmm... So they have taken the head and the torso... and are safekeeping the brain and the heart in two separate locations. If that is so then where is the head? Could it be at their headquarters located in the Vatican?” the professor went on to say as he pondered where it could be.

“All right, I will head there as well. Do you think you can deceive the academy’s barrier, number 846?”

“Yes,” replied Yashiro as she nodded her head as she stared at the magic circle that lied underneath her feet and the coffin. Being at the core of the Mystery Circle, or in other words the control room, it was not difficult for her to manipulate it. After taking a few seconds to get a grasp of the spell structure she then started to get to work.

“First... I should put the lid back on,” said Yashiro as she reached out to the lid at her side.

“Hold on, that looks heavy, let me help,” said a voice as Yashiro then picked the lid up and found she did not have to strain herself at all.

“Thank you very much,” Yashiro replied in an indifferent tone as he and the man then went about putting the lid back on the coffin.

“Next is...” said Yashiro as she then thought about the steps needed to perform a summoning and then realized the abnormal situation she was in.

“Yo, Well what do you know, you’re cute when you’re surprised, too,” remarked Iuli conceitedly with his out of place comment and then proceeded on to laugh casually.

“Asagami... Iuli,” Yashiro then went on to say as her eyes widened. Though she was usually expressionless and never showed any emotion the shock of finding out she was not alone was enough to make her entire body react.

“Why are you here?”

“Why? I went to class this morning and Momo-chan told me that you were ‘absent without permission’ so I came looking for you. Well, then again, I just wanted to skip class.” Yashiro was silent. She just could not understand him. It was true that today she took the day off from school without permission. However, when she thought about it, she had no plans of going to school once she had finished her task so in the end she could not understand the reason for why he went searching for her.

“So in essence,” Yashiro went on to say after thinking about it a moment.

“You like me?”

“Eh? How do you figure that?”

“Well it’s just that you went looking for me on your own as well as shadowed me.”

“No, well, that’s true, but-“

“So you were stalking me.”

“Well when you put it like that I can’t say you’re wrong at all.”

“I do not go out with stalkers. I am sorry.”

“You’re turning me down even though I didn’t even confess?!” replied Iuli as he became depressed about this whole turn of events. From Yashiro’s point of view it seemed as though he was taking up a defensive position or her words had actually hurt him.

“Haa, I got rejected again. Yukiha turned me down not too long ago... Am I really that unpopular? Ah, but Lucia... No, she probably did all that just so she could use me.” Iuli continued on dwelling on the subject and making complicated expressions on his face while doing it but then went on to rephrase himself.

“Well, you having feelings for me aside, I do really like you, Yashiro. I think I’ve liked you ever since I saw you use ‘Fire.’” Hearing this, the only thing that popped up in Yashiro’s head was a question mark. She remembers that time very well. She was outside investigating the Mystery Circle and, if anyone were to approach her and ask her what she was doing, she would lie saying that she was practicing in a place where there was no one around.

“Was there something strange about my magic?”

“No, your magic was normal. It was normal and bad.”

“It was a failure, after all,” retorted Yashiro as though trying to spurn him to which Iuli replied with “sorry” and forced himself to smile.

“If you have a problem it’s not because of the magic but because of your attitude. I like the way you look when you’re holding onto your doubts and contradictions deep in your heart as you’re using your medium.”

“ ‘Ah, why do I have to do this? Why do I have to go out of my way to this tool that makes me weak?’ Those are the sort of faces you’re making, you know.”

“There is no way you could tell-“

“I can,” interrupted Iuli.

“Those empty feeling and that feeling of boredom... I was really surprised that someone thought the same things as I did. I never would have thought that someone would have the same problems I was going through.” After hearing this, Yashiro then thought:

“So is he essentially saying that... he is hiding something as well?” That for some reason or other he was hiding his power just like she was. Just like a hawk that would hide its talons. She would act like she was bad but was actually holder of a great power.

“So today when you skipped classes I thought I would follow you for a bit... and it seems like I came to someplace pretty major.”

“Did you hear what I was saying earlier?”

“Yeah, you’re with the Black Witch Faction, huh.” It was a truly straightforward answer. In that instant, Yashiro’s heart became colder and thoughts of the things she had to do start to float to the surface.

“Ah, but you don’t have to worry about it. I don’t rat out on anybody. I can’t really say I’m big on the whole idea of ‘Witch Dystopia’ and their cult but people are free to believe in whatever they want. Though, I don’t think you should be doing bad stuff,” said Iuli without a single bit of nervousness. Yashiro ended up ignoring it as she heard a noise from her communicator.

“Number 846, explain the situation.”

“Forgive me, professor, it looks as though I was followed.”

“By who, by someone of the Knight Squad,”

“No. It is only a student who just transferred into the academy.”

“Then there is no problem. The one student who would be a threat to you... Would be Kagihara Io who is known as ‘The Gorger,’ right? Kill him.” Upon hearing this cold order, Yashiro’s eyes sank and became darker.

“Eh? Hm, I feel like I heard someone just say ‘kill him.’” Ignoring the man who did not understand the situation he was in at all Yashiro then raised both her arms and made the first move. There was not any hesitation at all in her movements. It was an attack that would lead her to an early victory. Just a second later, Iuli then thought:

“Oioi... Oioioioi.” When Iuli received Yashiro’s attack his face was a mix of surprise and of shock. Her attack had missed so he did not have to try and evade it but its power was amazing. Almost everywhere save for the scant one meter area surrounding him was completely burned. Her scorching hot fireball cleared away the marble on the marble floor. It was a Fifth Level Flame Magic known as “Hell Blaze”.

“Yashiro... Why are you using a fifth level spell like it’s nothing? And not only that I thought Hell Blaze was a spell only a dragon could use.” He thought she was hiding her power but he didn’t think she was hiding this high a level of power. While Iuli looked confused Yashiro just continued to look at him blankly.

“What? I ended up off target. I wonder if it’s because it’s been a while since I last used it.” She seemed to be dissatisfied with the results but after that it seemed like an idea came to mind and so raised her head. Putting a tight grip on her facial expressions, Yashiro made this firm comment:

“That was a warning just now. The next one will hit.”

“Nonono, don’t just bring out cool phrases out of the blue like that. That clearly felt like a miss just now, you know? You did say, ‘what?’ earlier.”

“I did not.”

“You plan on carrying this out?” Iuli inquired being fed up with the whole situation.

“Uuuh... Is this where... You try to rub me out?”

“More or less.”

“You serious, I mean just what are you after?”

“I do not know. I just do as I am asked,” replied Yashiro, her face still expressionless, as she said something so ruthless and got herself ready again. This time, however, was with both hands. Making the same fireball as she did before this time she made two of them and then sent them at Iuli.

“Tsk,” Iuli clicked his tongue. He then took a big jump and evaded both fireballs. It was just what you would expect of Iuli. If he had taken that level five spell head on he would not have come out unscathed. Or more he would have it’s just that he dodged them simply because he hated the heat. Though he is able to subconsciously cover his body with mana to defend against a level five attack there was still the possibility that his hair or clothes would get burned.

Such was the course of action he took. It would be faster if he dodged her so that’s exactly what he did. Iuli then jumped high into the air and planted himself against the ceiling of the spherical room. As he focused his mana to his feet to assist him so he could attach himself to it. Though Iuli was bad at magic he had a knack for controlling his mana like this. Despite his being the “strongest in the world” this basic ability was the one thing he spent his life perfecting.

“So you are above me,” stated Yashiro. She then rotated her right arm upward, locking onto Iuli, and firing another scorching hot fireball at him. Iuli then dashed across the ceiling as well as the wall to avoid it.

“Oi, Yashiro! Knock it off!”

“No.”

“Why?!”

“Because it’s an order!”

“Then isn’t there anything you could do about it?!”

“No,” replied Yashiro. The two of them went on to talk normally despite being in the middle of a firestorm.

“Sheesh, why did things have to turn out like this?” Iuli grumbled.

“I never would have thought Yashiro was with the Black Witch Faction,” Iuli thought to himself, “so does that mean that she was sent here to spy and do undercover sort of work? Just what am I going to do now?” Thought Iuli as he worried over the fact that he had to fight another girl so soon, Iuli then kicked himself off the wall and returned to the ground. He began running in a zig-zag pattern as he continued to evade her flames.

“But... Now that I get a really good look at her she doesn’t have a magic implement at all, huh,” thought Iuli as he analyzed Yashiro’s attacks while moving at high speeds. Unlike the magic races, mages need a magic implement otherwise they would be unable to activate their magic. Yet in spite of that she was using magic without showing any sign of using a magic implement and just using her body to use high level spells with ease. For her to be able to do such feat she would have had to been born a magic being or:

“No way... Yashiro, do you,” Iuli then went on to ask her in between her attacks, Asking to see if his guess was right or not.

“Do you have a magic implement planted inside you?”

“Yes,” answered Yashiro casually, “I am a cyborg” she then added Answering in a curt way as though she were answering a questionnaire and remaining expressionless. A cyborg, Iuli could not fathom just how true that word was.

“I thought experimenting on people like that was forbidden.” For centuries there had been people researching the implanting of magic implements into people. If one was able to implant the medium inside the person’s body they would be able to use their magic with even greater ease, allowing them to delve into deeper realms of magic. Such were the expectations but the Gouma Knight Squad made any and all research relating to the subject forbidden a few years earlier.

Publicly it was made forbidden because of how inhumane it was but there were also rumors that the research wasn’t all that successful. That the success rate was exceedingly low, so in the end what Iuli saw right before him was an experiment that was successful. If such was the case then just how many were sacrificed so as bring her about.

“No, that’s not what I should be thinking about now,” Iuli thought to himself. Yashiro’s attacks have become even fiercer. As Iuli then took a back step to dodge a fireball he then thought of a way to get out of his situation.

“Her attacks are so strong and fast. But even beyond that her attacks are so smooth. So this is what it’s like to have a magic implement inside you, huh. So that’s how it is. It makes people using their student IDs look just stupid,” Iuli thought to himself. If one was to equate it to anything it might be like a cheater studying how to ride a bike. The person would know how to ride it without having actually ridden it and even do well once they start riding it. In the end it’s just a completely pointless thing to do.

“Back and forth, back and forth, you are quite the swift one, aren’t you?” Yashiro then mumbled as she seemed to brood and stopped her constant firing of weak spells. With the barrage having died down Iuli stopped moving as well.

“What? You run out of mana?”

“No, I still have an abundance of mana left. Along with my spare, I have three magic implements that serve as batteries for my mana.” It’s just what one would expect from a cyborg.

“I was just thinking of changing my fighting style. If I use too many large-scale spells someone is bound to notice, after all.” Right as Yashiro was finished saying this, the aura around her body then began to glow a faint green color.

“No way!” Iuli’s eyes widened as he analyzed the magic circle that Yashiro was constructing.

“This is bad,” thought Iuli as alarms went off in his head.

“This is really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really bad.” The spell she was casting was a Fifth Level Body Enhancement spell known as “Ultimate.” It was a spell that used mana to strengthen one’s physical abilities and was a basic technique that magic beings, mages and even Asagami Iuli could do.

If one studied how to use it to its very limits they would be able to give their bodies an explosive boost in power. Or to put it very simply, it was a magic that made one harder, faster and stronger.

“I-If she uses that... Ya-Yashiro will-“ Asagami Iuli thought to himself as he was really breaking out in a cold sweat. Iuli then started to panic and cringe to the point of being almost pathetic. All sense of composure on his face completely vanished, leaving him with nothing but a sense of foreboding.

The cold sweat from his cheeks running down and gathering underneath his chin before falling, it was then in that instant that Yashiro used the explosive newfound strength in her legs to close the distance between them.

“Kuu!” grunted Iuli as he dodged Yashiro’s punch by a hair’s breadth, All the while Yashiro showing no emotion on her face whatsoever. What then followed next was a constant barrage of fists that Iuli was able to deflect just as equally. Not letting a single one hit him. This man who was able to deflect all attacks without taking a defensive stance, be it either a magical beast’s fangs, an Artifact’s blade or high level magic, was now awkwardly, if not barely, dodging her attacks.

“Shit. This couldn’t be worse! And what’s more she’s fighting me head on with her bare hands!” Iuli thought to himself. Just as he thought she was a mage who fought from a distance because of all the flame magic she used it turned out that it was just

as she said. Her specialty was her speed and fighting in hand-to-hand combat. This being the case, Yashiro had become his natural enemy.

“Kuu- Aaaah!” In the instant that he took a high kick at an incredible speed he was unable to deflect it and was sent flying and fell to the ground. The hand he used to guard against her attack was now throbbing with pain. The punch from her first attack that grazed his face was now bleeding red with blood. He had been injured.

“Haha,” Iuli thought to himself, “it’s been a while since I actually felt pain.” Asagami Iuli’s “unbelievable” strength was all derived from his mana. It was also because of this mana that cloaked his body regardless of his will that he was able to negate any and all attacks. However, this mana had one weakness: A woman’s attacks and only in hand-to-hand contact. For one reason or another Iuli’s mana allowed a woman’s punches and kicks to go right through. It was only in times when he was going to be hit by a woman that his unbelievable mana loses its unbelievable power.

The reason was unknown. Perhaps it was because of his absolute desire to follow his beliefs or perhaps it was because it was a power he awakened to so as to protect his little sister. Not even Iuli himself knew why this was the case. All that he knew was that, whenever it came to a woman’s physical attacks, he might as well be fighting naked.

“If she was at least the type to use a weapon I would have been able to do something... But of all things she had to be a fist fighter,” Iuli thought to himself.

“What with your evasive movements from earlier I thought you were an accomplished mage from outside the academy but,” Yashiro then went on to say as Iuli fell to his knees panting. Yashiro then added in a cold tone, “judging from the damage I have inflicted upon you it would seem that I grossly overestimated you. Or could it be that you are still hiding more of your power. I believe you did say such a thing not too long ago.”

“Now then, what should I do?” questioned Iuli as he put his hands to his knees and was on the verge of getting up when Yashiro started attacking him again. Using both of her legs that had been enhanced with magic, she kicked off the ground with her left and then took aim for Iuli’s head with her right. Iuli then reflexively put up his left arm that he was able to guard against it.

In the end he was able to move faster than his opponent because he had spent every day doing martial arts training. However, his being able to block against it or not wasn't the problem. What followed next was a dull cracking noise that was reminiscent of a rotten branch being snapped off a tree.

The severe pain would have been enough to leave a man screaming. It was only when it came to women's attacks that his mana would not work. In a situation like this his defensive abilities were even less than a normal mages. If he had taken that enhanced kick of hers head on the only thing that would have awaited him was destruction.

"Kuuu!" Iuli moaned in pain. If he were a normal mage he would have used a magic that would have allowed him to ignore his pain but all he could do was endure it. His gritting his teeth and enduring the pain was nothing but a chance opening for Yashiro.

"Haaa!" said Yashiro as she did a roundhouse kick from behind him. The kick she made to his completely defensive head with her supple leg was a clean hit. Iuli then fell to the ground again as he felt an intense pain in his skull and neck.

"Shit. Aah god it hurts. I thought you were going to send my head flying. I don't have an extra face lying around, you know," said Iuli as he desperately tried to make a wise crack as blood was flowing from his head. The damage he suffered though was great. His left arm was cleanly broken as well. Her kick to his head also seemed to hit a good spot also. His head was pounding from the pain and his vision and footing were shaky as well.

"Damn it... She's really strong. I can't keep dodging her but there's nothing else I can do," thought Iuli as he clicked his tongue. Strictly speaking, though, there was no way he could be without any moves.

In actuality it was just a matter his finally deciding to take down Yashiro. His absolute defense was all but meaningless but he still had enough for his absolute offensive abilities. Now he just had to make sure that his attack hit her first before hers hits him.

Iuli's fist truly was a weapon that could defeat any opponent with a single punch. No matter how much she enhanced herself with magic this was something that she

couldn't block against. His other option then was to undo his choker. Such were the options that came to his mind but none of them were what one would call good ideas. The reason being was because:

"This is rather one-sided. I feel as though I am bullying someone weaker than myself. Just what is the meaning behind your not striking back, Iuli?"

"Haahaahaa," laughed Iuli as he heard her say this indifferently. Smiling casually as he usually does.

"Just what are you talking about, Yashiro? There's no way I could hit a cute girl like you, you know?" Iuli then added, "I'd rather die than hit a woman."

"Now that I think about it you said something like that during the makeup test, didn't you," stated Yashiro as she seemed to become lost in thought.

"You are a fool."

"Is that a compliment?" It was in the middle of this exchange of words that Yashiro then closed the distance between them. Iuli then mentally prepared himself.

"Ah, um, Yashiro, Just what do you all plan on doing with that corpse?"

"I cannot possibly tell you that."

"I figured. Then let me change the question: if you take that corpse is it going to have an effect on the academy? It won't fall apart, will it?"

"That will not be an issue at all. Though I am sure it will affect the performance of the Mystery Circle."

"I see. I gotcha, so just as the Knight Squad isn't all good the Black Witch Faction isn't all bad either... If that's so then couldn't you just leave someone like me be since I just happened to stumble upon this place?" Iuli grumbled on for a short while. It was not until a little later that he let out a sigh as though he truly realized the situation he was in as well as to show that he had given up.

“All right, I got it. It’s my loss, Yashiro,” Iuli then went on to finally say after all his thinking. However, even after Iuli had declared his loss, Yashiro did not stop at all.

“Ah-Ah, I lost again. What am I going to do?” In the instant that Iuli went on to say this in a complaining manner he took a punch straight to his chest. It was a suitable last attack for the day and it was the strongest. Iuli took the force of the punch head on and was just sent flying. Bouncing across the floor until hitting the wall of the room, the force of the attack was enough to make the wall collapse and his body was literally buried.

With this the fight was over. In the end, with Iuli’s absolute beliefs along with his being rough or soft, he experienced a crushing defeat. With the witness defeated Yashiro then moved quickly on to what had to be done next, to change the control of the barrier to her and to manipulate a portion of it all of which was to summon no one else but her master.

“Professor, I have finished with the preparations.” Yashiro then picked out a piece of paper and then stuck it to the ground. It was a magic talisman that had a seal on it that provided the coordinates for teleportation magic. Once it was set, a faint light came into being and from that light came a man.

He was an elderly looking old man with white hair and a white beard. Despite having many wrinkles on his face there was a power in his gaze. His wearing a white lab coat making his being called “professor” all the more apt. His name was Tsuji Juushiro and he was Yashiro’s creator and father.

“Good work,” Juushiro then went on to say with a sour look on his face. Yashiro then nodded her head and withdrew to the back. Such was her duty when she was awaiting orders.

“Hmmm, so this is the deepest part of Seishun Academy, hm? It truly is well made. It’s just what you would expect of the genius ritual magic user, Royce Mariel’s, design. If I could I would love to spend my time studying it, but... Right now I do not have such time to do so,” Juushiro went on to say as he walked up towards the altar. Looking around and then placing his hand on the coffin.

“Oooh,” In the instant he opened the lid and looked inside his sour expression then melted away and his voice was then trembling with joy.

“This sinister and beautiful witch... Even if it is a corpse for it to still continue to have such vast amounts of mana is just unbelievable. There is no doubt about it. This is ‘Witch Dystopia-sama’s’ body.” As he stared on at the headless mummy of a corpse Juushiro was filled with two kinds of happiness, one being the happiness of a pious apostle and the other being the happiness of a researcher who has found something new to study. These two contradictory emotions then merged together and went about coloring his eyes a complicated color.

“Let us take this back with us right away, Number 846.”

“Understood,” replied Yashiro with a nod as she then went about carrying out his order. She then squatted down and put her hand to the magic circle at her feet. As no one ever thought anyone would come and steal anything in that room she was able to tamper with the magic formula and manipulate it.

“Hu, Huhu... Aah, I can’t wait. I never would have imagined that I would get to study ‘Witch Dystopia-sama’s’ body to my heart’s content and be able to do so with my own two hands... As a researcher all of my luck has been used for this one moment. As far as the head is concerned we should be able to find it as long as its link with the torso is not severed. Huhu... Huhahaha.” Unable to contain his rapture any longer, Juushiro then began to laugh maniacally and a mad grin broke out on his face. From there he then looked to the wall and squinted at it.

Is he still breathing, questioned Juushiro as he looked on at the collapsed wall. It was the wall that Iuli had collided with when Yashiro had defeated him. His body could not be seen but Juushiro was apparently able to sense his presence.

“Did you hold back on him, Number 846?”

“No, I fought him seriously. On the contrary, it was he who was holding back against me.”

“What do you mean?”

“That man did not even so much as try to attack me. He stated that he would rather die than hit a woman,” Yashiro then went on to explain as images of her fight with him began to appear in her mind. He just went on the defensive and did not show

any hostility towards her until the end. He just admitted his defeat and was a man that Yashiro could not understand at all.

“Hm, then he is nothing more than a fool. Well, so be it. Hurry up and deal him the finishing blow, Number 846.”

“Very well,” Yashiro finally replied and nodded as she was at a loss for words at Juushiro saying that which she knew was inevitable. Yashiro then advanced towards where Iuli was. Witnesses were not to be spared. She knew that better than anyone. What’s more, if it is Juushiro’s order then her sole existence was to see that order fulfilled and did not have the right to say no.

That was how Tsuji Yashiro was made, how she was raised and how she was treated. However it was for that very reason that when she found she was at a loss for words for even a second that she could not help but feel perplexed. For a moment she did nothing. Yashiro then stopped, turned around and spoke.

“Professor... I do not believe it is necessary to kill him.”

“What?” Yashiro thought to herself as she doubted what she had just said.

“Just what am I saying?” she then went on to ask herself as her mouth went on saying something completely different.

“This boy is nothing but a student. What’s more he is nothing but a talentless D-Rank mage so I’m sure there wouldn’t be any problem if we just let him be. More importantly, we should get out of here as soon as possible.” This was the first time that Yashiro had stated her opinion to Juushiro. As the parent who made her this was the first time in her entire life that she contradicted him.

“Number 846... Do you intend to talk back to me?” This, however, was unforgivable. Yashiro then felt a chill go down her spine as Juushiro’s eyes become frighteningly cold. He looked on at her as though she were a toy he did not want anymore and his eyes showed no attachment to her whatsoever.

“For a tool to tell me her opinion... Just what brought this on? Eeh, Number 846,” He went on to say in an emotionless tone as he pulled out a syringe with a green liquid inside it. Juushiro then stuck the needle into himself and injected the green

substance into his body without hesitation. As he then threw away the now empty syringe his body began to change.

One could then hear the vivid sound of his right arm growing as it then grew to a larger size. In that instant, his right arm grew green scales and five claws. Juushiro had turned his arm into that of a giant dragon's. The feeble old man with his uncharacteristically large arm now charged straight for Yashiro.

"Aaah,!" Yashiro had been caught by Juushiro's giant arm, letting out a high-pitched scream as her bones creaked under Juushiro's vice-like grip. Had she not used magic to enhance her own body she probably would have been crushed instantly.

"So you are a failure as well, Number 846... Even though meddling with your mind and soul with magic might cause a decline in your performance it looks like some improvements have to be made, for if I don't then you will come to learn about unnecessary emotions."

"Uuu! Uuuuuu!" Yashiro then went on to scream as her bones started to creak some more, her face becoming distorted with pain. Juushiro's face, however, did not change at all. It was as if he did not treasure anything and would throw things away when he was finished with them.

Like crushing a can of pop once you are finished drinking it. All she felt from him was an administrative and professional air about him. It seemed that anything and everything relating to the girl named Yashiro had been completely discarded from his memory.

"No," Yashiro thought to herself, "from the very beginning, the professor probably had plans... To dispose of me once I had completed my mission." She had been made as Tsuji Juushiro's tool. Her being forced to grow faster in an incubator as well as having information drilled into her was all for the sake of her infiltrating the academy. Her name, "Tsuji Yashiro," was something that was thought up just before she was enrolled at the academy as well.

"So once the professor had brought me here he had no use for me anymore... If that is so then it is only to be expected that I am to be disposed of. Even if I had not stated my opinion, he would have still had me disposed of."

From Juushiro's point of view this whole situation was worse than having a dog bite your hand. It was more like having your TV remote say that the show you were watching was terrible. Things went beyond simple humiliation and escalated into a more sickening and abnormal situation.

"I was thinking of using you for a bit longer what with your having exceeded my expectations. But since you are defective there is just no helping it." Juushiro then pulled his arm back and threw Yashiro to the ground.

"And of all things you were trying to defend a boy who's our enemy. Has a lowly tool like yourself awakened to your emotions?"

"Awakened to my... emotions? Aah, I see." As Yashiro could not get up she then found herself thinking of indiscriminant things.

"I've... Awakened to my emotions, haven't I," Yashiro thought to herself. She thought about Iuli and his being stubbornly opposed to fighting her, about how he called a girl like her cute.

"I was happy," she thought.

"From what I have heard he sounds like quite the feminist... Huhahaa," said Juushiro as he went on violently kicking Yashiro who was on the ground all while a sneer had broken out on his face.

"What a fool, Just how do you see 'this' as a woman? I have tampered with her insides to such a degree so doesn't that just make her a tool in the shape of a woman?!" No matter how many times he sneered at her or how many times he kicked her she did not feel any anger at all. On the contrary, she felt convinced because of what Juushiro said. The one who was wrong was Iuli.

"I am just a tool," Yashiro then thought to herself.

"Oh dear, this isn't the time to be doing such things, is it? I must hurry and carry 'Witch Dystopia-sama's' body out of here." In so saying, Juushiro then pulled back his fist and continued trying to rid himself of what he viewed as a defective product. Yashiro had prepared herself. She understood that rebelling and defying him was pointless. Juushiro was far, far stronger than her.

After countless human experiments and once he had found out the substance was safe he made it his own and had now acquired a power that no normal person could get. The dragon cells he injected into himself made him just as strong and as tough as any real dragon. His power so overwhelming Yashiro could not hope to block it with her own.

Yashiro lay silent and closed her eyes. If there was anything that she regretted it would not be how she contradicted him but because she got an innocent bystander involved. Juushiro then bore down on Yashiro with his five claws. In that instant Juushiro's eyes widened at what he saw. His claws that had caused a swell as they were bearing down on Yashiro had just stopped short of striking her. In the space of a single moment the boy had blocked his arm.

“You are-!” exclaimed Juushiro. Shocked at what he was seeing. He thought the boy had been buried under the rubble but before he knew it he was standing right in front of him. Even more shocking was the fact he caught his attack with one arm as though it were nothing. All of it was just so unbelievable to him.

“Asagami... Iuli,” said Yashiro after she opened her eyes to find Iuli defending her, half of his face red with blood coming from his head. His left arm broken and dangling to his side, he seemed to have injuries all over his body. Whatever the case, though, his face and body were trembling with rage.

Along with his being colored red with his blood he looked to be the very image of a demon. However, the fighting spirit that was overflowing from his body was not aimed at Yashiro at all.

“You shitty old man!” All of his fierce anger and sinister mana was all focused on Juushiro who tried to eliminate Yashiro.

“I don't even want to waste my breath on you, but... Let me tell you about the one absolute truth that no one can deny!”

“Why you... What did you do? How did you stop my atta-“ It was all over in an instant. It was all over with one attack. Iuli had pulled his right arm back and punched Juushiro right in the face. It was a simple punch. It was an uppercut that started from below and went up as it connected with Juushiro's face.

At the very least that is what Yashiro could make out. But in spite of that, Juushiro was sent flying like a piece of scrap paper and impacted the wall just below the ceiling. It was almost surreal how he flew like that. It was an instant kill. It was a one-hit kill.

“Wha-?!” Yashiro was stunned and at a complete loss for words. Though she could process information faster than any regular person it still was not fast enough for her to comprehend the ridiculous sight she had just seen. She could not understand anything in the situation but the one thing she understood the least was-

“This is a woman.”

Why she felt Iuli’s words were so endearing. It was here then that Iuli’s vision began to distort.

“Aah, it’s no good,” Iuli thought to himself. The damage he had received from Yashiro really was great. Right after he knocked Juushiro off his feet he felt like he was going to collapse right then and there.

He tried his best to keep himself on his feet but in the end he could not handle it and began to fall to the ground. Yashiro, however, gently caught him within her arms and then positioned herself so as to set his head atop her lap for support.

“Are you all right?”

“Yashiro, you okay? I’m sorry I didn’t come to save you sooner. I was just passed out.”

“Why did you save me?” Yashiro asked Iuli, her eyes trembling with uncertainty and doubt.

“Even though I am your enemy and caused you all this pain.”

“Why? Hmmm, I wonder that myself,” Iuli replied, forcing a smile on his face.

“I think it was because you’re cute.”

“I. See,” Yashiro replied, amazed, and a small smile appeared on her face.

“Please wait here. I will go and call for someone right away.”

“Ah, no, I’ll be fine. Just let me stay let me stay like this for a little bit.”

“But-“

“It feels really good using your lap for a pillow and it feels like my injuries will heal in no time.”

“You really are a pervert, aren’t you?”

“I get that a lot,” replied Iuli. Once he had said this Juushiro had finally fallen down from where Iuli had punched him, making a ridiculously loud crashing sound when he hit the ground. His consciousness vague and he could not hope to get up. However, he was able to crawl and headed for one place: the foot of his savior’s corpse.

“Witch Dystopia...- samaaa.” Though he desperately extended his shaking hand, in the end, he fell to the ground as though he were a puppet whose strings had been cut. Such was what Yashiro saw as her pain was leaving her. Seeing her look on at Juushiro Iuli could not help but find himself having mixed feelings about it.

“I hate to break it to you two... But that’s not ‘Witch Dystopia-sama,’” Iuli thought to himself, feeling nothing but sympathy for the two of them as they made a fundamental mistake. If everything they did was so they could get their hands on the remains of “Witch Dystopia” then such a thing was pointless from the very start.

“The Black Witch isn’t dead.” Three years ago it was the Black Witch, the strongest and worst of all Witches that killed the king of the vampires, Lord Bloody, and brought an end to the war between Vampires and Witches. There are those who fear her and believe she will bring disaster and destroy the world.

There are those who believe that she is the messiah who will save the world and worship her as such. Everything about her was shrouded in mystery. Not only did people not know her abilities no one even knew her name. This being said, however, Iuli knew that the Black Witch was alive. The reason being:

“Because I am the Black Witch.”



Chapter 7 – Witch Dystopia

We now look back to three years ago where we find the boy coming back to his senses after everything was finished. The sky was so dark with clouds of the darkest pitch that one might have wondered if the sky had forgotten what sunlight was in the first place. In this dried up wasteland that the boy had no ties to what he found, the land being dyed with the fresh blood of the dead, death.

As far as the boy could tell death was all around him, all of them the bodies of vampires. All of them especially powerful vampires that the king allowed to serve under him, that being said, however, all of the vampires lying around him had breathed their last breath. What's more, lying before him was the strongest king of the demon world, Lord Bloody, along with his vassals.

“Did I... Do this?” Iuli had no memory at all. However all of this was done by his hand. The wind started to blow and started to caress his hair. A wind that was unique to the Demon World that reeked of flesh and blood. It was here then that the boy saw that his hair had grown longer. So much so that it was longer than his body and it started to flow in the dry wind. It was long, beautiful hair that one might have thought belonged to a captivating Witch.

“Nii...sama.” It was when the boy heard this young familiar voice that he remembered his reason for fighting the king of the vampires. The boy then looked in the direction of the voice and saw his beloved little sister. Though her clothes were sullied with blood and dirt she did not have any serious injuries. She was alive.

“Seria! Thank god you're okay said the boy as he tried to run to her side but soon stopped after the first step. It was because she was looking at him with eyes full of fear. They were the eyes of someone looking at the Demon World. The eyes of someone looking at a monster they had never seen before.

“I... Did this, didn't I?” said the boy as his gaze fell to his hands. All he could feel in the palm of his own hands was a reality that did not feel real to him as well as a vague inkling that he became a monster the likes of which no one had ever seen.

Now we look back to 10 years ago. Gates were a passageway that connected the Human World and Demon World that only those with magic could hope to cross. There were many who would predict when and where a Gate would open up and so make the trip but there are those who get caught up in them like one would

get caught up in a disaster. In this case, one who was accidentally caught up in a Gate and sent to the Demon World was commonly known as being “spirited away.”

“***? ----? How about Japanese? You understand Japanese?” A boy found himself deep inside a pitch black forest the likes of which he had never seen in the Human World. The boy was covered in dirt and now found himself looking up to a young man. He had gallantly come out of nowhere and burned all the demons that were trying to attack them to a crisp in a single attack.

“Oh, it looks like you understand me. So you’re a Japanese kid, huh.”

“Who are you, old man?”

“I’m not an old man, you little brat. I’m Julius Howlgate and I’m the strongest YOUNG man the world has ever known I’ll have you know,” said the young man, Julius, with a fearless grin that he could not help but let come over his face.

“From the looks of it... You look like you’re 7 or 8. What’s your name, kid?”

“I don’t know,” answered the boy showing no expression on his face.

“I don’t know. I can’t remember. When I woke up I found myself here.”

“Haaa, you telling me you got amnesia? I’ve heard that people’s memories and souls get affected when they get ‘spirited away,’ but... This is such a pain,” said the young man. An awkward silence then came over them for a short instant.

“But you know, little brat, if you’ve got amnesia, then,” Julius then went on to say as he had a peek at what was behind the boy’s back, “just who is that girl you were desperately trying to protect?” Behind the boy’s back was a sleeping girl that was even younger than himself who ended up losing consciousness when they were being attacked by monsters.

“I don’t know... She said her name is Seria. We found ourselves together in this forest when we woke up and we met just yesterday.”

“Yesterday, that’s a pretty short time for you to get to know each other, huh. But even so you were pretty hell-bent on protecting her. You’re weak but you put her on

your back and ran this way and that... Why didn't you just leave her behind and save yourself?"

"I just felt like I had to protect her," answered the boy as he looked up at Julius who looked straight back at him.

"Well that's because men have got to protect women." Though he was taken aback by how clear the young boy's eyes were his face then shortly turned into a smirk and then an amused-looking grin.

"All right, I've taken a liking to you, you little brat." Julius then squatted down and reached out for the boy's shorts.

"Wha-?! What are you doing?! Let me go!"

"Don't get your panties in a bunch. I'm not into little boys. Oh, found it," said Julius as he flipped back the boy's shorts to find the tag on his underwear. On it were hiragana letters that were written with an oil-based marker.

"Hahaa. It was worth looking after all. Be happy, you little brat, your name's written right here."

"Well, I looked at it, too... But."

"Hm? Ah, I get it. It got all messed up from the mud so you couldn't read it. Let's see... So your last name's 'Asagami,' huh," stated Julius as he exhaled and unhanded the boy's underwear. More accurately, he pulled back on the tag of the boy's underwear as hard as he could so they would recoil and hit the boy with snap.

"Oi, little brat, starting today your name is going to be 'Iuli.'"

"Eh?"

"It was a nickname I had when I was a kid. It's good enough for you, isn't it? As for the Kanji, I guess anything will do," said Julius as he then seemed to pull a pen out of nowhere and wrote "Asagami Iuli" in big letters on the boy's t-shirt.

"Wha-What're you doing?! Aw man, this is so lame," whined the boy in a big loud voice.

“Do you want to get strong, little brat? If you want to protect your special girl then you have to at least be able to do it with your own two hands,” Julius then stated.

“I am going to make you... The second strongest in the world,” such was how Iuli became Julius’s disciple as well as Seria’s older brother. What with Julius being a mage without an attribute, he used various mechanical devices which allowed him to make a “Gate” and allowed them all to travel between the Human World and the Demon World as they pleased.

The thought of searching for their families that were probably in the Human World never once crossed their minds. What with Iuli having amnesia he did not have any sort of attachment or nostalgia for the Human World. What’s more he had Julius and Seria so he never felt that he was alone. As they all drifted between the Human World and Demon World Iuli devoted all his time to training and fighting. Time went on and we now find ourselves on that day three years ago from the present time.

For some reason or other Julius, Iuli and Seria found themselves in the thick of the ongoing war between the Vampires and the Witches. It was as a result of this war that Iuli gained his powers and his fight between himself and “Lord Bloody” made him “the world’s strongest.” It was in the instant that Iuli had his “awakening” that his hair then grew for reasons no one knew why. His hair was as long like a Witch’s.

For someone to be able to defeat the king of the Vampires it only made sense that that someone was as strong as a Witch. Such was why onlookers ended up mistaking him for a Witch the instant he defeated him while having such beautiful hair. Before he knew it, everyone started calling him “Witch Dystopia.”

“Hhn... What?”

“Are you awake?” As Iuli woke up he found himself looking right at a face with no expression whatsoever.

“Yashiro... Where are we?”

“We’re in the doctor’s office at the academy. You had been asleep for an entire day.”

“I see.”

“Ah, you need to lie still and rest-“

“I’m all right.” Though Yashiro sounded worried Iuli got himself out of bed. He took the bandages off his head and then broke the cast on his left arm just by flexing his muscles. Once he did so, he also took out the IV in his right arm which cracked and broke apart as he did so.

“Yup, I’m all good,” said Iuli as he flexed his left hand open and shut all the while Yashiro just stared at him, stunned.

“You have rather extraordinary regenerative abilities. Mages are certainly able to recover faster than a normal person but you recovered remarkably fast.”

“Yeah, it seems that I’m pretty amazing, I can heal most of my injuries with just a little sleep. But enough about that, Yashiro, What happened afterwards?”

“It went just as you thought it would- No, just as you planned,” stated Yashiro. What happened afterwards was that Tsuji Juushiro, barely clinging to life, escaped from the deepest part of the academy leaving his tool, Yashiro, behind. It was shocking how easily he abandoned her. Right as he left, all sorts of alarms went off and, once they found out about the emergency situation, a great many mages ended up stumbling upon Yashiro and Iuli. They demanded they explain what was going on. Yashiro, having prepared herself, was about to do just that with her usual expressionless face when Iuli, whose head was still resting upon her lap, began to explain the situation to them.

“Some man we didn’t know showed up so Yashiro and I followed him thinking he was suspicious. We ended getting in a fight with him but he just ran off somewhere. He’s the guy who did all this to me,” said Iuli as he passed out in the middle of telling his made up story.

“For the time being it seems that everyone believes your story. I do not know what will happen if they choose to investigate more thoroughly, though.”

“I see... Well, I’m glad things worked out for now,” said Iuli as he breathed a sigh of relief. Yashiro, however, did not seem as reassured. She seemed to be feeling apologetic and then hesitantly asked this:

“What... Should I do now?” Iuli was silent.

“Until now all I have done was do what the professor asked of me. That was my very existence. And yet he abandoned me... No, it was only natural that he abandoned me. I was the one who betrayed him first, after all.”

“So she betrayed him first, huh,” Iuli thought to himself. He was just shocked. Even after all that the professor had done to her it looked as though she did not feel any hate for him at all. Well, that being said, it didn’t seem like she held him in any high esteem either. To her it seemed that obeying the one who gave birth to her was a matter of inevitability and did not require any sort affection or feeling.

“If I was to think about this logically I should be going after the professor. Following that same logic, another choice would be going to the Knight Squad, telling them everything, and awaiting my punishment. Right now all I am doing is just going with the flow of things without doing anything at all,” Yashiro then went on to say as she looked on at Iuli, Her eyes looking as though she was desperate for Iuli’s answer.

“Just what should I do from now on?”

“I don’t know,” retorted Iuli in a sighing, scornful tone.

“That’s not for me to decide. It’s yours.”

“It’s mine?”

“And another thing, you should stop with this whole ‘I should do this’ or ‘I should do that.’ It’s not like having a sense of duty or responsibility is all bad but I’m not a big fan of them myself,” Iuli then went on to say.

“What’s important is what you WANT to do, right?”

“What I want to do, you say.”

“My not hitting you and my hitting that professor called Juushiro with everything I had were all things I wanted to do. So Yashiro, you don’t have to feel like you owe me anything, okay? Hell, you can even hate me if you want. I’ve prepared myself for that much.” Yashiro said nothing and continued looking on at Iuli.

“And when I lied to the Knight Squad guys it was just something I wanted to do because I would have been lonely if you had to go.”

“Is that so?”

“Yeah, we were just starting to get along, so let’s keep doing just that, as both classmates and as outcasts. I’m a transfer student here so I don’t have many friends,” Iuli then went on to say in a playful manner as a smile came over his face. Meanwhile Yashiro was bit her lip.

“Thank you... so much,” said Yashiro as she bowed her head very low to show her gratitude to him to which Iuli said “don’t worry about it” and smiled back at her. The doctor’s office was serene and had a very comforting air about it. After a few minutes Yashiro then raised her head again.

“I have decided that from now I will live for you,” stated Yashiro, saying something that Iuli did not quite understand. Her face and tone were indifferent but her two hands she held tightly together at her chest seemed to suggest that she was more than willing to do just that.

“Huh? Eh?”

“So as to atone for what I had done to you I was thinking of offering you my entire body. That is what I ‘want to do.’”

“Hold on... Didn’t I just say that you didn’t owe me anything because it was all stuff I wanted to do?”

“If that is so then I am just repaying my debt to you because I want to do it.” With Yashiro putting it this way Iuli had no way of persuading her otherwise.

“By the way, Iuli, judging from your defeating the professor with a single blow I believe you have extraordinary combat prowess. However, when you fought me, you were honestly not that much of an opponent at all. Your movements were poor as well. Why was this?” Iuli was at a loss for what to say so Yashiro then kept the conversation going:

“In light of everything you have said could it be that you are bad when it comes to dealing with members of the opposite sex?”

“It’s not that I’m bad with them... Ah, well, I guess I am in some ways. I just don’t want to fight girls,” replied Iuli. Though his answer was vague this made Yashiro’s eyes sparkle.

“In that case, as my first attempt to repay my debt to you, I will do everything I can to cure you of your fear of girls.”

“Huh? No, you don’t have to,” said Iuli as he tried to explain that he didn’t have a fear of girls and that she didn’t have to do that, but then Yashiro replied:

“I want to be of service to you.” After seeing the pure light within her eyes it seemed that he just could not refuse her.

“All right, I guess I’ll ask you to help me out then. But just how are we going to do that?”

“By doing this,” said Yashiro as she grabbed Iuli’s arm and then pressed his hand against her chest with a squish. Iuli could tell just how soft it was. All thinking stopped. His mind went blank. All that he thought about now was the happy sensation he was feeling with his right hand. Though admittedly he was getting to feel her breast for more time than was really necessary Yashiro was also making a point of pressing his hand right against her as hard as she could.

“Hhnn,” after hearing Yashiro moan Iuli finally came back to his senses.

“Eh? Wha- Huh?!”

“This is shock therapy. How do you like it?”

“Wha-Wha-What sort of question is that?!” Though he had plenty of knowledge but no experience Iuli could not help but be flustered by this sudden turn of events.

“A chest such as mine may not be able to provide much stimulation but-“

“No,” thought Iuli, “this is plenty stimulating, even more than I would have liked.”

“If you have any requests then please tell me. No matter how embarrassing the outfit or position I will do whatever you ask of me. I will do whatever you want until you become more accustomed to girls.” Just from looking at her eyes Iuli could tell that she was completely serious. As she did not seem to be joking he could not find the words to talk back to her. Yashiro was dead serious.

“Oioi,” Iuli thought to himself, “what’s with this situation that’s right out of every guy’s fantasy? I mean, is this really what she’s like? She acts all chill but is actually a pretty big airhead with a one-track mind?” Though Iuli was bewildered by all this he then took a big gulp, swallowing back his saliva.

“Se-Se-Seriously, You’ll seriously do whatever I ask?”

“Yes.”

“Really, Like really really? You won’t go ratting out my preferences to anyone afterwards?”

“I won’t,” said Yashiro as she shook her head. If he asked her it seemed like she really would do anything for him.

“Wha-What do I do? What do I do? As a man, no, as person I should refuse her... No, wait, if I let this chance go,” thought Iuli as his mind wandered between his good sense and his libido. Then as a result of his agonizing over it to the point where it seemed like smoke would come out of his head:

“Hhnnn.” He ended up putting strength into his hand that was at her breast without even realizing it.

“Aah... Ex-Excuse me... It Hurts, A little.”

“Eh? Aah! So-Sorry!” said Iuli in a panic as he then took his hand from her chest to which Yashiro said, “I-I am all right,” with her usual expressionless face. However, there was a small hint of red in her cheeks that made her undeniably cute.

“Just what do you think you are doing, Nii-sama?” said a cold, cold voice from the doorway of the doctor’s office. Turning to the doorway in a panic he saw two girls standing there. One was Seria who was glaring at him with a frighteningly cold look

in her eyes. The other was Yukiha whose face was bright red and who was utterly speechless.

“Yo-You’re here... A-Ah, no, it’s not what you think, she-“

“You two are Kudoin Yukiha-san and Asagami Seria-san, correct?”

“Yashiro... Aah, this is perfect, why don’t you tell us just what is going on here?”

“I am beginning to feel an alarmingly strong hostility coming from them. I see now, these girls are your enemies, aren’t they.”

“You sure got that wrong in no time flat! Oi!”

“I will eliminate all your enemies.”

“Stop it!”

“Please don’t try to stop me. Any enemy of yours is an enemy of mine. My body and soul are all yours. If I am able to use my life for your sake after you had saved me then I would have no regrets.”

“Ah, for the love a- You’re such a pain!” And so their bizarre master and servant relationship was born.

“You appear to have some rather vulgar hobbies, Nii-sama. You have already made a fellow classmate of yours submit to your will. I am just astounded.”

“Do you not show any restraint even against girls?! What an... unforgivable brute!”

“I will protect you, Iuli.” It was then with the two girls seething with anger and Yashiro getting in their way with her sense of duty that they started fighting. Their glorious catfight then went on for a painful thirty minutes before Mishima Momo barged in saying “Shut up!” as she was passing by.

Once Mishima Momo left the room, Iuli then explained everything to Yukiha and Seria while he was sitting in his bed. He cleared up the whole misunderstanding about him and Yashiro as well as told them about how he got hurt as he determined that he could not trick them seeing as how they knew about his power.

“Haa. I thought as much,” replied Seria who was convinced by his answer. She had become familiar with her brother’s habits so at this point in time her reaction was nothing short of lukewarm. Yukiha, however, had her eyebrows scrunched close together and her lips closed tightly as she glared at Iuli.

“Seria, Yashiro, I am sorry to ask you this but could you allow me some time alone with him? There is something I wish to talk with him about.” As Seria was adept at reading the mood and sensing Yukiha’s aura that seemed to grow by the second she simply gave her consent by saying, “I understand.” Meanwhile, the one who seemed unable to read the mood at all then went on to say, “I cannot possibly leave Iuli by himself. I will-“

“Yashiro-san, come with me,” Seria went on to say as she dragged Yashiro out of the room as she was stubbornly trying to stay with Iuli.

“So, what did you want to talk about?” Iuli then asked her now that they were alone. Yukiha then pulled the chair near his bed close to her and sat down.

“Your weakness is... hand-to-hand contact with girls? That truly is a bizarre disposition you have.”

“Yeah, you’ve got that right.”

“But, I was surprised to hear that Yashiro was a part of the ‘Black Witch Faction.’”

“It was pretty much the same for me. Ah, but, keep this secret, okay? I get the feeling it would be a major pain if people found out about this.”

“For someone who is a part of the Gouma Knight Squad keeping secrets is an unforgiveable offense but... Considering the circumstances this time I will keep this a secret. There is no telling what will become of Yashiro if I reported this to my superiors. From what you say it sounds like she was just following orders and nothing more.”

“Thank you, Yukiha, you’re really understanding. You may look stubborn but you’re surprisingly flexible and deep down you’re a kind person.”

“Flattery will get you nowhere. Honestly... Ever since I met you my school life has become completely and utterly derailed. First it was the whole thing with Lucia and now with Yashiro. I am keeping far too many secrets from the Gouma Knight Squad.” Though she forced herself to smile her eyes were not smiling at all. Her face then soon tightened up and said, “Iuli,” as she was ready to move on to what she really wanted to discuss, her eyes looking unbearably serious and cold.

“Why are you injured?”

“Huh? I just told you, didn’t I? It’s because I lost to Yashiro. She was really strong. It was no contest at all. She beat me really good. Hahaha.”

“Do not try to laugh this off!” yelled Yukiha in a rough voice as she suddenly became enraged, so much so that Iuli could not help but feel embarrassed.

“It should not even be possible for you to lose. You hold such a strong and sinister power that no matter how many strong opponents try to oppose you... You would still be able to win,” Yukiha then went on to say as her hands on her lap closed up and began to tremble. As one who knew his strength, as well as what he was like with his choker removed, Yukiha just could not be convinced that he lost and became angry in turn.

“I’m sure it was because you were fighting Yashiro... That you were fighting a girl that you held back, right?”

“I’m sure it would seem that way, but like I’ve said before... I just fight my battles my way,” replied Iuli as he spoke about his pride.

“I have grown tired of hearing that nonsense,” retorted Yukiha as she dismissed what he just said. Yukiha’s voice then went hoarse as she then said:

“You could have died for all you know.”

“Yeah, I could have... But even so that doesn’t make it right for me to hurt a girl... that’s just the kind of guy I am,” Iuli replied. The two of them were completely parallel to one another. There was no arguing between them whatsoever. The air became heavier. A painful silence then ruled the room they were in. The two of them glared at each other but neither one of them looked away.

“My mother is... Missing in the Demon World,” stated Yukiha as she broke the silence as though it were thin ice. Her confession was so sudden that Iuli could not help but be surprised.

“She went missing in the Demon World? So does that mean your mom’s a mage too?” Iuli asked Yukiha to which her face turned grave and nodded. The Gouma Knight Squad was known to make regular expeditions to the Demon World. Seventh Heaven as well as an additional dozen mages or so would be dispatched to the Demon World through the “Gate” so as to monitor activities in enemy territory.

“Three years ago my mother, Kudoin Haruha, was chosen as a member for an expedition to the Demon World. Then while she was carrying out her mission all contact from her was lost.”

“Hold on... Did you say three years ago?” said Iuli as he could not just let those words slide.

“That’s right. My mother went to the Demon World to monitor the war between the Vampires and the Witches,” answered Yukiha to which Iuli’s heart then started to beat really fast in response.

“My mother was the first to arrive at the scene of the war between the Vampires and the Witches when it was at its peak. It was there that she told her comrades about its result and it was immediately after that that they lost all communication with her. So in essence, the one who reported “Lord Bloody’s” death as well as “Witch Dystopia’s” victory was my mother.” Iuli was just at a loss for words. Yukiha was more than likely talking about her own mother as though she had nothing to do with him but this must have been some kind of fate. Her story had a great deal to do with him, even more so as he was at the very center of it. For the one known as “Witch Dystopia” who ended the war was none other than him himself.

“I had a feeling someone was watching me,” Iuli thought to himself, “but who would have thought it was Yukiha’s mom.” Even though he could not remember it someone had watched him the very instant he wielded that supernatural power where he murdered the king of the vampires.

“Then the one who mistook me for a Witch,” was more than likely her mom, Kudoin Haruha, Iuli thought. In other words, it was her who gave birth to “Witch Dystopia.”

“Though members of her group weren’t treated as having been killed in action it is said that many of them died. All at the hands of ‘Witch Dystopia,’ that is.” To this Iuli said nothing.

“However, I have faith. I am certain that my mother is still alive and I will be sure to find her myself!”

“So is that... Why you’re in such a rush to join the Knight Squad?”

“That’s right. Only a select few members of the Knight Squad are chosen as members of the expedition to the Demon World so I first have to become a member of the Knight Squad if I even hope to ever get to the Demon World.” She was sure to find her mother herself. That was Kudoin Yukiha’s motivation.

“So the reason she didn’t rat out Lucia to the Knight Squad was also because of her mom, huh,” Iuli concluded to himself. For someone with such a strong sense of duty it seemed odd for her to do something like that but after hearing what she just said it all made sense. For Yukiha her connection to the Demon World was also her connection to her mother.

“I wanted... to be recognized for having done great things. I wanted to distinguish myself on the battlefield. I wanted to achieve feats of valor. I wanted status. I wanted authority. I wanted rank. I wanted power,” Yukiha went on to say as she then glared at Iuli with eyes seething with anger.

“And that is why I hold you in contempt.” To this Iuli did not say anything and just let Yukiha go on.

“There are things I want so badly I could taste it and yet... Your not thinking anything of ‘power’ vexes me to no end!” Her feelings just came flooding out. Because of her encounter with someone as incomprehensible as Asagami Iuli the resentment she had kept bottled up inside her now came bursting forth. To the girl who yelled at him with bristled eyebrows he just silently lowered his head.

“It’s not like I wanted this power or anything,” said Iuli to which Yukiha fell silent.

“It’s not like I asked to be given this power I don’t know anything about. I didn’t... Become a monster because I wanted to.”

“Iuli, I-“

“Psych!”

“Wha-?!” Even though his shoulders were shaking and he was speaking as though he was about to cry Iuli then instantly softened his expression and let his tongue stick out.

“Haha, did I get you? You’re a really honest girl, huh. I hate to break it to you but I’m not the kind of guy who can just sit back and listen to girls when they’re about to cry.”

“Kuu. Why you-!,” As Yukiha’s shoulders were beginning to shake Iuli’s voice went back to his usual playful tone.

“Ever since I was a kid I always wanted to get stronger. I got stronger because I wanted to. So when I wished for it I ended up getting it. I don’t have a clue whether or not it was a miracle or just some kind of coincidence but I just ended up awakening to this power at just the right time and it’s no one’s but mine so it’s up to me how I use it, right?”

“The moment we were born with mana we mages were chosen to fight against the magic beings. We are both fated and tasked with protecting people from the threat of the magic beings.”

“Hmmm... I said this earlier to Yashiro, but... I don’t really like things like fate and duty.”

“Though you wield such immense power you have neither an objective nor a cause and just spend your time living casually. If that is not being careless then just what is it?”

“Then just what do you want me to do?” said Iuli in a bored tone as he scratched his head.

“You want an overpowered guy like me to just go to the Demon World and wipe out all the magic beings? And then when that’s over do I have to protect the people from natural disasters or something? Are you telling me I have to sacrifice myself and do everything I can all for the sake of everyone else? Wouldn’t that just make me a slave then? Give me a break,” said Iuli as he shook his head.

“It’s my life.” If I’m the world’s strongest do I have to become the messiah? Should I become a devil and make a plan to take over the world? Why do I have to have some big goal or cause? I don’t need any of that. Whether I’m strong or not, I haven’t changed at all. I have my own life to live Iuli then thought to himself.

“I-“

“Enough,” said Yukiha as she took a deep breath and stood up from her chair.

“On the battlefield... It is the strong who are just. What is said by the strong becomes justice. You are stronger than me so in this case the one who is just is you.”

“Haa. That sounded pretty sarcastic. It’s not like you at all.” Yukiha was looking down at Iuli with a horribly pitiful look in her eyes. She looked disappointed. As though she was betrayed by the one she believed in and was in grief.

“I am disappointed in you. I never want to see your face again.” Once Yukiha said this she then ran out of the room as though she were trying to escape. As she slammed the door with great force she found a blonde haired girl standing at her elbow. It was Iuli’s little sister, Seria.

“Seria... Did you overhear our conversation?” Yukiha then asked her but as she was saying it she then thought otherwise and that it was Seria’s intention from the very start to eavesdrop on them. She had acted all understanding, dragging the stubborn Yashiro out of the room and just as Yukiha had thought they had gone she alone was standing close to the door listening in on their conversation. It seemed that Asagami Seria was a girl that was more calculating and felt more strongly about her brother than Yukiha had imagined. Just as Yukiha was feeling awkward she diverted her gaze without saying anything when she heard Seria say, “Sow” under her breath.

“What did you just say?!” demanded Yukiha as she found Seria’s mouth open. When Yukiha instinctively turned around to face her she felt a chill go down her

spine at what she saw. Though she seemed like a cute middle school student all signs of tenderness on her face was gone and it was almost as though a demon was glaring right at her.

“Do not insult Nii-sama, you pig sow!” She was usually so polite so Yukiha never could have imagined that such a girl could have such a foul mouth. Her behavior that exuded nothing but elegance before was all but gone and all that could be felt was her hostility that seemed to ooze from her body. It seemed that her “true nature” had been revealed.

“Do you have any idea... of the suffering that Nii-sama went through these past three years? Do you have any idea of how afraid and conflicted he has been about having fists that could destroy everything?! That day... It was because of me that he.”

“Eh?” Thought Yukiha as something had caught her eye.

“Her canines are extending!” Were they dog teeth? No. They were fangs meant for devouring prey. However the fangs protruding from her lips were completely different from that of a beast’s. They were fangs of the purest white that seemed to exude a kind of nobility about them.

“Nii-sama is my pride, my hope, my family, my all! So I will not forgive anyone who insults how Nii-sama lives his life!” At the same time Seria could be heard exhaling a sinister mana began to leak out from her. Yukiha could feel a cold sweat go down her back. The pressure she felt was almost the same as when she faced off against a magic being and her body became rigid.

““Do not try to laugh this off?!’ Just how long... Do you think Nii-sama has been forcing himself to laugh when he has been feeling nothing but anguish and despair? It is because he knows that he has a power that could bring about disaster that he laughs and lives as he does... So don’t you dare try to degrade him!” Yukiha was speechless and could not utter a single word.

“Apologize! Apologize to Nii-sama right now! Bow your head to the ground and grovel at his feet begging for his forgiveness! Because if you don’t, I-!” Yukiha could not help but feel horrified and fearful of Seria who was lost in her anger. Yukiha found her feet frozen and unable to move at all overwhelmed by her aura that was like a monster’s

“Just what is with these siblings,” Yukiha thought to herself.

“Are you telling me that it was not just the brother who was unusual but the sister as well? I’m afraid. Just a few moments ago I had let my anger control me and I ended up scolding Iuli and yet the rage in my heart is now being eclipsed by fear and I’m held captive by it,” Yukiha thought to herself.

“I get scared a lot, don’t I?” Yukiha stated in her mind, letting a small smile break out on her face as she found that she was mocking herself. In the end though, it was an empty smile.

“I really have... made myself weaker to the point... where I could hate myself,” Yukiha then thought.

“All right, that’s enough,” echoed a carefree voice that seemed to wipe away the feeling of impending doom that was lingering in the air. Out of the doctor’s office then came Iuli who let his hand fall right on Seria’s shoulder.

“Ni-Nii-sama.”

“Yo, little sis.” Though Seria had looks of shock and regret on her face her brother spoke as he always did.

“Do you think you could wipe my body down? I ended up having some night sweats and being my little sister you’re the only one I can really ask, right?”

“Ye-Yes, that is true,” replied Seria who seemed to shrink out of embarrassment as Iuli then gently patted her head.

“Sorry about that, Yukiha. We’ve still got a lot to talk about so don’t just- Huh?” Iuli ended up cutting himself short as he found himself looking in Yukiha’s direction only to find that she was not there anymore.

“Well this sucks.”

Late that night, inside what is the third training area outside of the academy; the training area was about the size of a soccer field and was surrounded by a wall made especially for it.

“Ooooooooooooooh!” went a beast that roared a dignified roar that echoed through the dusk. In the sky was a full moon whose light illuminated all four corners of the training area. Within its walls it was filled with dozens of magic beasts. Though they were pseudo-magic beasts that were born of magic and were specifically made for training purposes they were in actuality stronger than the real thing. Their current program level was set to “MAXIMUM” which was the level that A-Rank mages fought them at. In the air one could see the air sparkling.

There were shards of ice that were scattered throughout the air that glittered in the moonlight. It was Kudoin Yukiha’s Artifact – “Diamond Dust.” These faint, ephemeral ice shards that seemed countless in number then became blades on their master’s command. Yukiha was facing the pack of magic beasts all by herself. The ice shards she had prepared then began to spin like a tornado and assault her enemies as she dodged their attacks. The way she moved one might think that she were dancing. Wielding her Artifact with superhuman speed and reflexes “Persephone” seemed to dance on the battlefield. One by one the magic beasts kept falling until in the end only she was left standing.

“Bibiii,” echoed the buzzer that signified the end of the training session, the monitor on the side reading “CLEAR” on its screen. Once finished, the monitor then went on to display data for such things as power, spatial perception as well as many other things one after another. However, no matter where one looked, the figures that were displayed far exceeded any student level. Nevertheless, Yukiha was not happy with what she saw. On the contrary, her face became twisted with impatience and anger.

“Damn. This is no good. This is no good at all! This isn’t anywhere near good enough!” said Yukiha as she agonized over the results. After she had run away as though retreating from the Asagami siblings Yukiha came straight to this third training area. To avoid any incidents one was not permitted to enter the training area unless they were accompanied by at least one other person but no one had noticed her and she just set the battle program herself. She had been doing nothing but battle programs for what was now close to ten hours. She continued fighting as though she were trying to hurt herself. Staying still was just not an option to her. It was almost as if she were about to be driven insane by her jealousy and guilt.

“One more time... Just one more time,” Yukiha had her Artifact return to its original form and then set off to do the same program again but her movements

were exceedingly dull. Her face looking nothing short of fatigued. Yukiha's knees then buckled and she fell miserably to the ground. Upon doing so mud had gotten into her mouth and she found its taste very bitter.

"Damn," was the only thing she could say, after recklessly continuing to fight for as long as she did Yukiha's body had already reached its limit, she then found that she could not even get up and then pounded the ground out of frustration. It was then that the image of Iuli's face then popped into her head, him and his loose, carefree smile.

"Why won't it go away?" Yukiha thought to herself. For no matter how much she sweated or abused her body she could not get his face out of her mind. Yukiha regretted horribly what happened in the doctor's office.

"The fault lies... Entirely with me," she then thought on to herself. Yukiha understood better than anyone that what she said was how she truly felt but that she was just taking it out on him along with her cowardly jealousy.

"So I whine and beg for what I don't have... I'm no different from a child am I... But I just could not hold myself back," Yukiha thought to herself. Seeing someone with the "power" she so coveted and yet put limits on using that very "power" Yukiha could not help but feel angry.

"It would seem that I am just ordinary," thought Yukiha. No matter how skilled she was, in the end, she was only within the known standards. No matter how many times she tried to reach out and get her hands on power:

"I just can't reach it." She was like the frog in the well that no matter how many times it tried to jump out, it would never be able to reach the top.

"I want power," she thought, "if I just had that I am sure I would not feel so miserable. If I had power then I am sure that I would be able to stand by his side." With the full moon shining on her Yukiha then began to weep soundlessly. For a brief instant the honest and proud girl was in the grips of extreme emotion and it was this very instant that someone was waiting for, for "it" was standing right there. It suddenly appeared out of nowhere as though it was fated to appear when she was at her weakest.

“Ju-Just who are you?!” demanded Yukiha as she desperately tried to get her exhausted body up and forcing her body into a defensive stance. What appeared before her was a woman. Her full-grown body cloaked in pitch black clothing. However, one could not say for sure if she was beautiful or not. The reason being was because there was nothing above her neck. Yukiha swallowed her breath. She knew in an instant that it was a Witch- No; she was forced to believe that it was. The thick, deep black mana cloaking her body made it all the clearer what she was. But, would Witches be able to survive without a head? As fear and doubt began to take its hold in Yukiha’s heart the headless Witch then began to cackle and laugh. Of course the Witch had no head so it should not be able to laugh but laugh it did. Even though it shouldn’t, whatever the case, that’s the impression Yukiha had. The headless Witch then began to slowly approach Yukiha, all the while slowly outstretching both its arms.

“Sta-Stay right there,” pleaded Yukiha who desperately tried to run away but she had used up all the energy she had and could not move. The Witch then gently embraced her. It was an exceedingly gentle hug, so gentle it was cruel and sinful. It was the kind of hug that accepted and forgave any sort of human weakness and cruelty.

“Ah... Aaah.” It was in this moment that Yukiha felt something strange eat into her. It was the feelings of something pitch black entering her body as if it was something eating away at her, Feeding on her, sullyng her, violating her. The girl whose skin was as white as fresh snow and without a single blemish on her body was now being tainted blacker and blacker.

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!”

Chapter 8 – The Strongest in the World

“My, you are up quite early today, Nii-sama,” remarked Seria as both she and Iuli were waking up the next morning. The path to school still absent of any other students a rare sight indeed seeing as how Iuli would usually sleep in until just before the bell rang.

This morning he woke up early and ended up running into his little sister who was always quick about getting to school.

“Yeah... I just woke up and couldn’t get back to sleep,” replied Iuli. The two of them walking side by side as they headed to school. As they walked along the brick paved road Iuli’s face turned severe as he then began to say this:

“Seria... About Yukiha yesterday-“

“I did not do anything wrong,” snapped Seria as though rejecting what her brother had to say as he sounded as though he were about to scold her.

“That girl... Does not understand you at all, Nii-sama.”

“You’re right. You didn’t do anything wrong. But then again, Yukiha didn’t do anything wrong either,” Iuli then went on to which Seria just listened on quietly.

“I’m happy that you got so angry for me. But Yukiha has her own problems and circumstances. You might think that she hurt me, but... It’s the opposite. The one who was hurt was Yukiha so... make sure you make up with her, okay?”

“Very well,” replied Seria who then nodded and Iuli smiled gently.

“Let’s both go see Yukiha when we’re done. I still have stuff I want to talk to her about, so... Hm?” Once out of the courtyard Iuli noticed a familiar silhouette right in front of him.

“That’s-“ It was the figure of a small boy with a long sword resting on his shoulder. It was history’s youngest member of Seventh Heaven- Kagihara Io.

“Ah, it’s Io-kun.”

“Io-kun?” remarked Iuli whose eyebrows shot right up out of surprise.

“Oi, Seria, do you know that shorty?”

“It is not so much that I know him but more that he is a classmate of mine. He hardly ever comes to school so we have barely talked at all.” Iuli had no idea that Seria was a classmate of his.

“But even so aren’t you acting a little too familiar with him?”

“You say that but it is still not easy to make him open up... Then again, Io-kun is surprisingly popular so if I could I would like to be on good terms with him.”

“Wha-What’s that?! That shorty with the evil look in his eyes is popular?!”

“It is true that he has a bad look in his eyes but he has a good face. One cannot complain about his abilities or his belonging to the prestigious ‘Kagihara’ family so he is quite wealthy. He has even already fought on the frontlines so I would think he has quite a few desirable traits about him.”

“So he’s strong, cool and rich, huh... Damn, he’s a triple threat. Guess the only thing he hasn’t got is height.”

“I am going after him as well. If do it right I might be able to marry into his wealth.”

“What?! Oi, Seria! You’re kidding, right?! I’m telling you it’s still too early for you! Your big brother won’t allow it!”

“Huhuu, I was only kidding,” replied Seria, while this was going on Io stopped dead in his tracks, turned around and headed right for them.

“You monkeys are awfully noisy even though it’s so early in the morning I see.” It seemed that Io had overheard their conversation. Though he was looking up his gaze was exceedingly sharp. It was uncertain whether it was because he had low blood pressure due to the early morning and his still being so young but he did not seem as on edge as he usually did.

“If you are going to talk behind my back then do it when I’m not around. Like in the afterlife, for instance.”

“Huh? You’re telling me to die, shorty?”

“Oooh, I had intended to be roundabout in the way I put it but it seems that you understood exactly what I meant. It looks like you are smarter than I thought. Even if they are failures I suppose people are still people.”

“Who are you calling a failure?!”

“Good morning, Io-kun,” said Seria as she bowed. Her greeting seeming to break through the dangerous mood they were in.

“Who are you?”

“I am one who attends the same class as you. My name is Asagami Seria.”

“Oi, shorty, are you saying you don’t remember my little sister? It’s usually common practice for guys to look out for all the cute girls in his class you know.”

“I hate to break it to you but I have no interest in my class or school,” said Io as he looked between Seria and Iuli, comparing them.

“Hm. You siblings do not look anything alike at all. Had you been I never would have thought the little sister of one whose face was reminiscent of industrial waste would look so beautiful.”

“What’s that?! Are you saying my face is similar as to the appearance of industrial waste?! Huh?!”

“Calling me beautiful of all things... You are going to make me blush.”

“Don’t you dare blush, Seria.” To Iuli who was now brimming with hostility and hiding Seria behind his back Io only let out a sigh that signified his losing interest. He then turned his back on the siblings and left them without saying a word. Then suddenly-

BOOM!

Without any warning whatsoever an incredible impact assaulted the three of them right where they stood. The three of them then all faced where the attack came from.

“This sinister mana... is it a magic being?”

“It has an incredibly strong power. This attack was not made by any ordinary magic being. It must be Dragon- no, Witch-class.”

“But even so... Isn’t this cutting it a little close? I mean, isn’t this the academy? It’s got a barrier up and everything, right?” As Io, Seria and Iuli were starting to analyze the situation an emergency siren started to go off.

“This is an emergency. There is a possibility that a magic being has invaded the academy. All faculty members as well as students who are B-Rank or higher are to gather in the auditorium.

All students who are C-Rank or lower are to head to the underground shelter.” As the sound of the loudspeakers traveled across the campus everything was thrown into pandemonium. There was a magic being in the school. Even a transfer student like Iuli understood just how unprecedented the situation was.

“It couldn’t be Lucia, could it?” Iuli wondered to himself as thoughts of the one Witch he knew was in the Human World came to mind as he was honing his senses.

“No, this isn’t Lucia’s mana. This mana is-“

“Seria!” called Iuli to his younger sister as she was more capable at sensing mana than he was.

“It is more than likely the person who you suspect it is, Nii-sama. The mana has been degenerated a great deal- no, more it has become tainted and corrupted a great deal but... I am sensing faint traces of Yukiha-san’s mana from it. There is no mistaking it. The source of this eerie mana is... Kudoin Yukiha-san.” Upon hearing this Iuli could not help but clench his teeth.

“It’s not like the barrier isn’t working... Just what’s going on? Why is Yukiha-“ Iuli wondered to himself as Io then said:

“Now that you mention it I am certainly sensing Kudoin Yukiha’s presence.” As the two siblings were shaken up by this turn of events Io was the very definition of calm. What’s more the corners of his mouth were turning upward and a smile was forming. The eyes that seemed so tired before now held a dark gleam within them and they became the eyes of a hunter stalking his prey.

“You listening, Iuli, We mages, just like the name implies, are those who can use magic,” stated Julius as Iuli’s mind found himself remembering an old memory of his without even realizing it.

This was during the time when he was learning how to fight. It was during the time when he was first being called Iuli so he remembered it very well. Julius had called him because he wanted to discuss something very serious with him.

“They’re people who only use magic but they are not magic energy themselves. You better carve that right into your soul because otherwise you’ll end up being used by your magic energy.” To be used by his magic energy. At this point in his life Iuli understood that phrase better than most anyone. For three years ago on that day Iuli was-

““The Mystery of Magic Transformation,”” said Io under his breath.

“A very long time ago, long before mediums were being made, there were people who went about forcing the activation of magic without any aid whatsoever. From what I have heard, of those that succeeded, a scant few would go berserk, become swallowed up by their mana and become monsters that had lost all reason.

That’s the ‘Mystery of Magic Transformation.’” Mediums were certainly tools to help those ventures into the realms of magic but at the same time they also served as a means of keeping people from straying down the wrong path. That which has never failed in guiding people into the realms of magic, as well as kept people from straying down the wrong path, were the mediums.

“In an age where the use of mediums has become commonplace this is a rarely seen occurrence indeed. Did she cast a forbidden spell or something?” wondered Io as his face did not change a single shade as he was analyzing the situation. Iuli on the other hand, who was by his side, clenched his fist.

“Did you lose to temptation, Yukiha?” asked Iuli who asked her even though she was not there and, naturally, she did not answer. At this, Io began walking. Not to the auditorium as the broadcast was instructing but in the direction of the mana he was sensing.

“Oi, where are you going?” asked Iuli as he grabbed Io’s shoulder in a panic.

“Isn’t it obvious? If the enemy is a magic being then the only thing to do then is to subjugate it,” said Io in a callous tone all the while bearing a grin that revealed his desire for bloodshed.

“Let’s get this bloodbath started.”

“What was that?”

“With an enemy of this level it would only be a matter of time before I am ordered to dispatch it. Sending me in alone is the surest tactic to keep casualties to a minimum. Crowley Mitsu would understand this.” For all Iuli knew he might be telling the truth.

All B-Rank students and higher were instructed to gather in the auditorium but if a member of Seventh Heaven was nearby then he may very well be given such an order in the end. However, the reason Iuli was angry was not because of his moving without waiting for the order.

“An... enemy?! You bastard, you do know that’s Yukiha, right?”

“There is a strong chance of that... What of it?”

“She’s human! Isn’t she a comrade of yours?!”

“It would be a pity if we lost her, wouldn’t it. Of course, if it seems like I can communicate with her I will try to persuade her but if it does not seem so then I will start by cutting off her arms and legs. If that does not stop her then I will stab her in the heart and decapitate her.”

“You do know she’s a girl, right?”

“Yes I do.” His gaze was sharp like a dagger. There was no hesitation in them at all. His pitch black murderous intent shining at the very back of his eyes and there was no sign that he could be swayed. It seemed that, in the eyes of Kagihara Io, gender meant nothing to him.

“This is a good chance. I was thinking of crossing blades with her one day. I have no idea how she got her hands on that power but... With this much power I could not ask for a worthier opponent for my blade.” As Io said this he shook off Iuli’s hand and then began walking again. However, Iuli then stopped him again.

“Stand aside.”

“I refuse,” answered Iuli as he stood himself up to his full height to which Io squinted at him.

“As a member of Seventh Heaven and as your superior I order you to stand aside.”

“And I’ll just refuse you again,” said Iuli as Io gazed at him as though daggers were going to come flying out. Iuli did not falter however and looked right back at him. Io then let out a small breath and smiled.

“That’s quite the sense of chivalry you have. Are you planning on becoming a hero or something?”

“Huh? Hell no,” replied Iuli who smiled back at him.

“I’m Asagami Iuli. I’m not good or evil. I’m just a guy.”

“I see, you’re the type of person I hate. Die.” His eyes shined like a sword’s. His words so cold it felt as though one would freeze. Though he was short in stature unusually powerful mana and blood thirst were emanating from him. Io who was disobeying orders for a just cause then unleashed his entire power without holding anything back.

“Seventh Heaven Third, ‘The Gorger,’ Kagihara Io now challenges you to a duel,” stated Io as he let down his sword that was resting on his shoulder, holding it vertically in front of him with the sword still in its sheath.

“Howl to the night sky like a lone wolf.
Feast on carrion like a starving wolf.”

With the catalyst now in place the Raven Artifact started to activate. Though they are the strongest weapons only the Seventh Heaven Knights are able to exhibit their true power and so are the only ones allowed to wield them.

“Fenris Wolf!” In that instant, their surroundings were enveloped in a light of the darkest pitch. It was a long sword of a most sinister design. Red patterns then started to form on both the handle and pitch black sheath. The sheath itself seemed normal and novel enough but no one could imagine the power of the blade that resided within it.

No matter how one thought about it, it seemed as though it would be impossible for someone to unsheathe such a sword with such an ominous shape.

However, words could not hope to describe the sense of intimidation one felt from the long sword. It was as though a bloodthirsty wolf had transformed into a sword. Io then held the sword's sheath in his left hand and made his stance with it by his side. He then put his right hand on the handle and lowered his body and prepared for an Iai.

"Show me that you can last at least two seconds. If you do that then I will recognize you as an enemy." A ferocious grin then appeared on his face and immediately after that he closed the distance between himself and Iuli using the explosive power of his legs.

However, in the next instant, he completely vanished, using a "Warp" movement technique that surpassed the very concept of speed by allowing one to move at super speeds.

At this point in time people could not even register that he even used the technique so one could say that his "Warp" was his secret to being able to slay his opponents without fail.

No matter how many people witnessed it they probably would not be able to follow his movements at all. The next place where Io appeared was directly behind Iuli. The air around him distorting somewhat like a ripple in a pond as the small king revealed himself.

Putting all his strength in his right hand so as to cut through Iuli's completely exposed opening. With his unsheathing of his sword at such an unnaturally high speed he would be able to show off the special quality of his "Fenris Wolf" as much as he liked. The match was decided in an instant.



At the same time he turned around he pulled back his fist and brought it down on Io. That was all he did. Despite that being all he did, though, the brick walkway then

began to crack and break underneath with Io at its epicenter. History's youngest member to join Seventh Heaven was pounded right into the ground almost as if he were in a gag manga. With its master now unconscious, "Fenris Wolf" then reverted back to its original form.

"Just go to sleep, Shorty," said Iuli as he shook his hand after extracting it from Io and then turned away from him.

"Seria, I'll leave Shorty to you. He was pretty strong so I couldn't really hold back."

"All right," said Seria who nodded her head without hesitation to Iuli's words.

"I'll be off then."

"Take care," replied Seria as Iuli then ran as fast as he could. After seeing her brother off and seeing him run off into the distance Seria then went about grabbing Io's foot. With a grunt Seria then used all the strength she had as she went about pulling Io out of the ground as though he were a daikon.

"Oh my, you are completely unconscious... However, it does not look as though you were hurt that badly. Nii-sama's opponent was quite formidable. It is just what you would expect of someone who is a part of Seventh Heaven," said Seria as she then looked on at the unconscious boy's face and lowered her voice:

"Hmmm... Io-kun is not bad but, as I thought, Nii-sama is just so strong and cool." Though she could not pay him back for the damages done to him she supplemented it with her small, bashful smile.

The size of Seishun Academy was immense. Even though he was running from the courtyard in front of the school building there was still quite a distance to where he was sensing Yukiha's mana. What's more was that the way he was running was nothing short of superhuman. If there were buildings in his path he would jump over them and jump off the roof. If there were trees he would jump through them like a monkey or a flying squirrel. For a mage he was running exceptionally fast. With his worry for Yukiha fueling him Iuli continued to run on. It was a few minutes later that Iuli traced the source of the mana - The third training area.

“Man, this is just nasty,” said Iuli as face turned to a frown as he looked at the surrounding area. The third training area was in ruins. All semblances of the extra strong walls specifically made for the training area as well as the pseudo-magic beasts that were made for the sake of practicing summoning were all but gone. Everything was destroyed without a trace. As the gate could not stop him Iuli was able to set foot into the training area without worry. Once inside the collapsed space Iuli found the air filled with pitch black ice shards that almost looked like black snow. It was Kudoin Yukiha’s Artifact – “Diamond Dust.” What with his encounter with it in “Space” he was able to tell what it was right away. However, this Diamond Dust that was filling up his vision was completely different from the one he had faced before. The ice shards that were like shards of glass and beautiful like powdered snow were now dyed the color of darkness. These dark shards seemed to waft through the air swallowing all forms of light and in the middle of it all... was a girl crying.

“Yo, Yukiha,” went Iuli as he laid his eyes on her and called out to her casually. Sinister-looking tattoos had been engraved on her arms and face. The black patterns seemingly writhing across her as it spread across her body almost as if were trying to bury her in its black design.

“Oh, Iuli,” replied Yukiha in a listless voice and with a lonely expression on her face. She looked as though she had no strength at all and that she only just got on her feet now. Meanwhile, her body on the other hand was exuding an unusually strong mana.

“I had a feeling that you would be the first to see me.”

“I’m honored to hear that,” said Iuli as he tried to get closer to her.

“Kuuuu!” the magic patterns running across her body gave off a dim light and she screamed out in agony.

“Oi, you ok-“

“Look out!” In the instant she let out this sorrowful scream all the pitch black ice shards filling the air began to assault Iuli. The sound of the ice shards fracturing whatever they struck was incredible. Upon contact, the countless small blades tore apart the wall and gouged the earth. Iuli’s surroundings were completely scraped

away. Their surroundings completely obscured by a cloud of dust but in the middle of it all spoke Iuli:

“Yeah... it’s certainly gotten a lot more powerful than before. I could feel it prickling my skin a little. Your attacks on a whole other level to the one you hit me with in ‘Space.’” Completely unscathed Iuli then calmly analyzed the situation.

“Her power’s skyrocketed but her accuracy’s taken a real nosedive.” When Yukiha attacked before the accuracy of her attacks were like a fine tuned machine. Everything about her attacks was calculated and all of them targeted her enemy’s vital points. This attack, however, felt as though she was just relying on strength alone and that she was just slapping him with her attacks. What’s more, she ended tearing up her own school uniform with her own attack.

“She’s completely lost control,” Iuli concluded to himself as he looked around him.

“The randomness of these attacks isn’t because of her explosive power boost or because she’s gone berserk... Is it because she’s trying to fight it?” One could tell with a single glance that Yukiha was suffering. He had virtually no idea what the cause was but it seemed as though she were being corroded by something strange and shapeless. However, Yukiha hadn’t been swallowed up by the power yet. She was resisting the uncontrollable power and desperately trying to suppress it.

“Huhuu, ‘look out?’ I have to say I could not have said something so pointless,” said Yukiha as she let a weak, self-deriding smile come over her face.

“So even after attaining all this power I still cannot reach you... Just what are you, Iuli?”

“Well I could ask you the same thing, Yukiha,” replied Iuli as he frowned at her. The girl in front of him was just so painful to watch.

“Just what did you do? What happened?”

“I don’t know... Last night... I just suddenly found myself like ‘this’ ... I have been desperately trying to resist it, but... I am about to reach my limit... I feel as though my consciousness is going to be swallowed up.” After hearing this, Iuli clenched his teeth so hard one could hear his teeth grind.

“Shit... Just how many hours has Yukiha been fighting on her own? Why didn't I notice anything?” As Iuli was condemning himself for not noticing sooner Yukiha gave him a small smile.

“Seeing me like this with your own eyes... I am sure you must find this most hilarious.” Iuli said nothing and made no effort to reply.

“I sought power, set strength as my goal, struggled pitifully... And the result is as you see before you. I was tempted by this sinister power and now it is trying to take me over. Now that I have tainted my hands with the black arts I will never be able to stand as your equal... Aah, how frustrating... I still want... I still want to become stronger.” Such was the girl's one woeful desire. The girl had laid bare her envy and Iuli quietly accepted it. Once she was finished:

“Hey, Yukiha,” Iuli then called out to her as though he wished to engage in small talk with her.

“What is ‘strength,’ he then asked her as he started to walk towards her. In an instant, her mana reacted to him and the glow from the magic patterns running across her body became even stronger.

“Kuu... Aaaaaaaaaaaaaah!” Yukiha then began to move like a puppet on an invisible string and prepared for combat with her rapier. With Iuli's straightforward approach it appeared that the strange, shapeless power had perceived Iuli as an enemy and so readied itself to attack so as to protect its master. Yukiha then started to invoke her Sixth Level Ice and Snow Magic, “Leviathan.” Her strongest attack, in an instant, black icicles and frost crystals completely enveloped their surroundings. In the space of one second gigantic jaws were formed that looked as though they could devour the entire sky. This “Leviathan” did not even compare to the one formed in “Space.” The speed in which it was made, its size, its power it was all on a whole other level. However:

“Haa, it feels so empty. The other one was a lot stronger,” said Iuli as he looked out at the frozen world expanding before him.

“This isn't ‘strength’ at all.” The dark jaws then began to assail him but he made no effort to evade or defend himself.

“Oraaaaaaaaaaaa,” all he did was screaming, scream with everything he had. Such was all he did and cracks began to form in the jaws that covered the sky and began to shatter from the sound of his voice. He was able to negate a sixth level spell without even touching it. His was a strength that was all its own. A power that was altogether absurd. Such was the D-Rank mage, Asagami Iuli. As the ice crystals began to fall Iuli then resumed his questioning.

“Just what is ‘strength,’ Yukiha?” To this Yukiha said nothing.

“Is it being able to beat your enemies? Is it being able to knock any guy you don’t like off his feet? Strength isn’t that simple, you know?” As Iuli was saying this the scenes from three years ago began to flood his mind again. They came to him without his even meaning to, scenes of the bloody massacre his being controlled by his magic energy. The look on his sister’s face as she looked at him in fear, the wielding of a power that returned everything to the void, The day in which he became “Witch Dystopia” and “The World’s Strongest” was deeply embedded in his mind.

“I think you’re ‘strong,’ you know.”

“Me? Strong?”

Yeah, you don’t take things easy and always work hard towards your goal... I really do think you’re ‘strong,’ Yukiha. I really respect you for trying to make yourself stronger.” It was here that Yukiha could do nothing but listen to him.

“Struggling to become strong is not pathetic at all. Watching you as you were trying to become stronger... You looked so beautiful and cool.”

“Wha-?! Of all the times you could have picked you choose now to make fun of me, do you?” replied Yukiha whose face showed faint signs of turning red. On the other hand, Iuli chuckled a little bit and then continued on, “can I talk about myself for a little bit?” He did not get the chance to say it yesterday so he then began to say it now.

“I want to live a happy, carefree life.”

“Huh?” replied Yukiha, looking wide-eyed at him.

“How do I say it... I want to live my life while trying to keep my nose out of trouble as much as possible. I just want to eat when I want to eat, Sleep when I want to sleep, As well as live an easy life while fooling around with a hot babe or a cute girl.” Yukiha was just shocked to hear this and, just like the day before, she looked upon him with eyes full of disgust.

“Well, just hear me out until the end,” Iuli went on.

“I want to live with a smile on my face but in order for me to do that everyone else has to be smiling, too.” Yukiha’s expression softened slightly and she then continued listening on in silence.

“If it’s so everyone else can smile then I will do whatever I can to make it happen. No matter how much of a pain it might be or what sort of fight it is I will stick my nose in it,” once Iuli said this his gaze then fell upon his fists.

“One day I just became stronger. Once that happened I thought about a lot of things... And tried to think about how I could use this for the sake of the world, but... I’m not that smart so in the end I just didn’t know how.” If you had become the strongest in the world, in the end, just what should you do? As far as an answer to this was concerned Iuli could not find one.

“That’s why I decided to do what I wanted to do. If I think I want to do something I do it. I thought that if I wanted to use my power then I would want to use it to protect the things and people I loved.” It was not a matter of what he must or should do but a matter of what he wanted to do. It was here when he changed his way of thinking that he came to realize the emotion buried deep within himself.

“I wanted to become like my master.”

“Your master?”

“He’s an old dude that pisses me off like no other but he’s really cool. He never became part of an organization and never took orders from anybody. He just wandered all over the place and fought with nothing but his own rules and values.” Seeing the man who raised him Iuli felt from the bottom of his heart that that was how he wanted to live. If it were a matter of physical strength Iuli was probably stronger than Julius now that he had “awakened.” However, in Iuli’s mind, he had not surpassed his master at all.

“I’m just like you, Yukiha. I also want to become ‘stronger.’ I don’t just mean physically or in combat but stronger as a person and as a man.” It was here then that the strongest man went on to say: “I have my own path to walk.” His words that were spoken straight from the heart without any signs of being untrue permeated Yukiha to the deepest depths of her soul.

“I see... I am sorry for holding you in contempt yesterday. Forgive me. It would seem that you are not a fool after all,” said Yukiha as she gave a twisted smile underneath the magic patterns that were running across her face.

“You are a great fool!”

“Oi, in the end you’re just going to insult me?”

“I was only kidding,” said Yukiha as her body was then assaulted with great pain right after exhaling. Yukiha felt as though a snake were wrapping itself around her body and biting her. She felt that if she lost focus for even a second that her consciousness would be destroyed.

“Gu... Uuu... Haa... Haa.” As she desperately continued to suppress the sinister mana covering her body she then looked to Iuli with a sorrowful expression on her face.

“Iuli... I have a request.”

“And I’m just going to refuse it,” answered Iuli immediately, Interrupting her.

“Bu-But I still have yet to say anything!”

“Ha! I’m sure you were just going to say, ‘please kill me,’ right?” As Iuli couldn’t have been more correct Yukiha was at a complete loss for words and let out a simple, “uuu.”

“No way, That is so not happening.”

“The-Then just what am I supposed to do? I am... Just about to reach my limit in terms of keeping ‘this’ restrained.” Since last night Yukiha had been fighting this “thing” that was attacking her. Her stamina and mental strength had long since

reached their limits. She could not fathom just what would happen if she gave in to the mana's sweet temptation.

"Even I do not wish to die... But... If I stop trying to suppress 'this' ... There is no telling what horrible things it will do... I can sense that is the nature of this horrifying power." Yukiha then bit her lip as she looked on at her arms being engraved with magic patterns as well as the black ice shards drifting through the air. Her feelings of fearing the loss of her sense of self as well as her pride as a mage began to swirl and mix together inside her.

"If I am just going to become a monster after losing my sense of self... Then I would rather die," said Yukiha as she desperately tried to show her resolve to die.

"And I'm just going to refuse you again." Iuli's decision was unwavering.

"Even if it kills me I will not hit a girl."

"Then just what are you saying I should do?!" demanded Yukiha as she started to scream in agony. While on the other hand, Iuli just stared right back at her.

"You do something about it," said Iuli as he gave an incredibly roundabout command.

"Tha-That's all you have to say?"

"Don't worry, if it's you I know you can do it. Just believe in yourself." Yukiha found that she could not say anything to what Iuli just said.

"Give it everything you got. Show it who's boss! As long as you do that I'm sure you'll be able to get past this."

"That's nothing but using one's own state of mind!" said Yukiha as she retorted back without hesitation to which Iuli then laughed with a "haahaahaa."

"Well, I'm sure you'll work this out. You'll be fine. Kudoin Yukiha isn't the kind of girl to lose to something weird like this." Yukiha was just stunned at Iuli's words for which he had no basis for whatsoever. However, for reasons she did not understand, she felt slightly comforted by his foolhardy trust in her. The boy in front of her stared right at her without a shred of doubt in his eyes.

“This isn’t my time to shine. It’s yours, Yukiha.” Asagami Iuli did nothing. Though he wielded a power that labelled him as “the world’s strongest” he did nothing but watch her. He believed that she would somehow be able to take care of this herself and so left everything to her.

“Aaaah!” As if to mock that trust the immense power then began to assault Yukiha again. Her brain, her heart, her spirit, all of it was being tainted black. Almost as if she were being tortured on the inside by poisoned tentacles. Yukiha felt as though her very existence was being devoured from the inside out. Her ego was beginning to fade.

“You can do it, Yukiha! Don’t give in! You’re going to go look for your mom, right?!” Though his cheering was irresponsible Yukiha could hear them surprisingly clearly.

“Don’t lose! The girl I fell for isn’t this weak!”

“Ku-Kuuuu!” She resisted. She suppressed the pain in her head that felt as though it would split it in half and desperately continued her fight with it. Desperately fighting against the darkness that hoped to corrupt everything she was.

“A-Ah! Aaaaaah!” As she was doing this Yukiha could feel something warm at her hands. Iuli was holding them with his big, warm hands. Yukiha thought of them as the hands that pulled her out of the very depths of despair.

“Show it whose boss! Kudoin Yukihaaaaaa!”

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!” And then, a faint light began to envelope them. The black shards that were filling the air vanished in an instant. Yukiha’s Artifact, “Diamond Dust,” reverted back to its original form and fell to the ground from Yukiha’s hand. The black patterns that were crawling across her body were gone and the sinister mana that was corroding her spirit was gone as well. She was somehow able to take care of it herself. With her body going limp Yukiha was on the verge of collapsing. She used up all her mental strength, stamina, mana and everything else so now Yukiha could not even stand anymore. It was then that Iuli caught her and held her in his arms.

“Nice job,” said Iuli as he looked on at the pale Yukiha in his arms with his signature smile.

“What... did you think of that? I am strong, right?”

“Yeah, you are. Just as I thought you were.” After Iuli said that Yukiha then mustered all the strength she could to turn her hand into a fist. She then delivered a horribly weak punch to Iuli’s cheek. As Iuli’s mana allowed for any female to strike him physically Yukiha’s fist, of course, was able to pass right through it. Her punch landed and made a pathetic patting noise.

“Hm? What was that?”

“It was a punch... for getting on my nerves in more ways than one.” As Iuli tilted his head in confusion a smile of relief broke out on Yukiha’s face.

“Ah, I see,” thought Yukiha as her fist was still flush against Iuli’s cheek, “from the very beginning my fist could reach this man.” Asagami Iuli was truly looking at her for who she was and that was exactly why he believed in her until the end.

“Hey, Yukiha,” said Iuli as he spoke to Yukiha who was still in his arms.

“I’ve fallen in love with you all over again. I knew it, let’s get married.”

“I refuse, you fool,” replied Yukiha as she did everything in her power to hide her embarrassment.

Epilogue

Being “strong” in and of itself has no meaning. No matter how strong or weak one is it has no meaning at all. It is when one first uses it that it starts to have meaning. Someone who is just will use that strength justly. Such was Crowley Himitsu’s, otherwise known as “The Disobeyer,” belief. While she has the seventh seat in Seventh Heaven, which is the weakest seat there is, she became their leader and is an exceedingly irregular existence in Seventh Heaven. Both admired and scorned she came to be nicknamed “People User” and is the weakest leader in all of Seventh Heaven’s history.

She had chosen Kudoin Yukiha, but,” Crowley thought to herself, “well, though it was unexpected, I suppose she was at the right place at the right time.” Three days had passed since Kudoin Yukiha encountered the “Headless Witch.” At the moment Crowley Himitsu was walking by herself in the garden behind the academy. Though the caretaker of the garden was standing right in front of it Crowley just took the watering can for herself and began watering the plants.

“I thought she would succumb to the magic energy, but... It would seem that she was able to ‘make it her own.’ However, ‘her’ power still lies within Yukiha-san. Such is why the one we have to truly be wary of is Asagami Iuli who was able to stop her from going berserk by touching her... And using his power.” While she had several thoughts going on in the back of her mind she did not let it show on her face at all. From an outsider’s point of view she probably looked like nothing more than a woman watering plants and loving nature. Himitsu continued caring for the plants all the while bearing a peaceful expression on her face. It was right then that she heard:

“I found you.” In a flash, Himitsu pulled out a dagger she had hidden inside the watering can and cut through the air even though nothing was there. In so doing, a tear formed in the air even though there was supposedly nothing there to begin with. It was then as if a colorless, invisible curtain was pulled back that a man appeared from out of the tear.

“Kuku, hahahaa!” He was a tall young man. His hair was long and he had a stubbly beard on his chin. He was clad in a pitch black cloak and just seeing him like this one still could not help but feel a strange intimidation about him.

“They say that the world is vast but you’re probably the only person who can see through my camouflage spell, Himitsu.”

“It’s been a long time, hasn’t it, Julius Howlgate,” stated Himitsu as she looked straight at him. At the man who was once her superior and comrade who fought alongside her a long time ago.

“No, perhaps I should call you former captain, instead.”

“Spare me. I thought I gave all those boring titles to you. And besides, knowing you guys, you probably deleted all the records from when I was captain, right?”

“Of course,” Though both were smiling, one was peaceful and the other sarcastic. Behind both of them, however, was a hostility that they were trying to keep hidden from one another....

“I thought you were never coming back here again.”

“It’s nothing; I’m just stopping by for a little bit to see how my damned disciple is doing.”

“Disciple,” said Himitsu as her expression changed.

“Julius... Just what is that boy?” asked Crowley Himitsu as she knew about Asagami Iuli’s “power.” Just the fact that he was Julius Howlgate’s disciple made him worthy enough of suspicion and as such she had him monitored the entire time. As a result, she came to know of his monstrous power.

“Just what is... That ridiculous ungodly strength of his? That power is something a character in a battle manga or gag manga would have. His power just seems out of this world.” Even though he was asked a question, Julius did not answer. He just had an intrepid grin on his face. Seeing his lack of an answer, Himitsu then dropped the subject and gazed right at him as she said:

“I see you have more scars. Just what have you been doing this past while?”

“Ah, right, I’ve been training. Yeah.”

“Training, well this is a surprise. I recall you being someone who hated training more than anything else. Might I ask just what brought on this change of heart?”

“Isn’t it obvious?” Julius answered bluntly.

“It’s to kill ‘Asagami’ Iuli.” Though Himitsu was speechless her face took on a slight frown all the same.

“I’ve been desperately training day and night so I can kill that damned disciple with my own two hands. As he is now it’s no understatement to call him ‘the world’s strongest.’ There isn’t anybody in this world who could beat him so I’ve got no choice but to become stronger,” Julius continued on as an insane grin came over his face.

“Then it’s as I thought, is there something about that monster, something about his existence that must not be allowed to exist for the sake of world peace? Three years ago, just what in the world happened?” She desperately tried to convey her emotions in her questioning but Julius did not answer and simply replied:

“He’s not a monster. He’s otherworldly.” Not a monster, but otherworldly, such was Julius’s reply.

“Having someone otherworldly like him around will bring about the collapse of the world,” stated Julius, his eyes the color of resolve a pitch black, gloomy resolve.

“I see you are serious.” Himitsu was convinced. The man before her truly intended to kill his own disciple.

“Huhu... Huhuhu, however, it would be troubling if you killed him. Even if I did give you discounts he is now a part of the academy and is now my subordinate,” said Himitsu as a smile quietly came over her face.

“I will... Use that boy,” smiled the tactician with a smile that would make one think of a cunning snake.

“What with that immeasurable strength and that feministic side you imparted to him... He truly does seem like someone I could make full use of. Julius, if you are just going to throw him away then I will take him for the used price.” Before Crowley Himitsu such things as “strong” or “weak” held no meaning. The reason being was because what mattered to her was whether she could “use” someone or not. For no matter how strong a pawn is on the board facing off against it directly wouldn’t be an option for her.

“With the coming domination of the Demon World in mind I will utilize him, exploit him, and apply him wherever and whenever I can... And use him until he cannot move anymore. I will have him be the Gouma Knight Squad’s second ‘trump card.’”

“You better quit while you’re ahead. He’s too much for you to handle.”

“I am the ‘People User’ Crowley Himitsu. If you are unable to handle someone I will be able to gain full mastery of them. Being able to use ‘the world’s strongest’

would not be bad either.” As far as the boy was concerned, the man said “kill” while the woman said “use.” Both mages then glared at each other without looking away.

“Himitsu, you do know that I have a short fuse, right?”

“Yes. Of course I know. For someone such as yourself whose pride goes beyond the heavens despite your small vessel I know you better than anyone. In addition, what with my being the woman that I am, I also know that you will not fight me seriously.” In an instant the air became exceedingly tense like a piano wire. Despite there being no sign whatsoever both moved at the exact same time. Julius pulled out two kodachis from his cloak and Himitsu began to infuse her dagger with her mana.

“Dispel the gloom like thunder,
Tear the blue sky to shreds like a hurricane.”

“Twist fate like a tragedy.
The clown laughs like in a comedy.”

In so doing, the two of them were enveloped in a relentless whirlpool of mana. The two of them, stronger than any gathering of mages, then manifested their Artifacts.

“Dioskouri”
“Matryoshka”

Two spears then appeared in Julius’s hands, one three-pronged and one two-pronged. These pitch black mechanical-looking spears were enveloped in purple lightning that emitted a scorching glow. In opposition then was Himitsu who had a single book in her hand a black book with a lock on it. The book was bound shut with many chains and were all connected to the lock that was at the very center of it. From what one could tell it had an exceedingly sinister power about it but also a power that one could not tell just by looking at it. It was like a drawn weapon and a hidden weapon all in one. Then in the instant their two contrasting powers tried to mix... Flash! A single large bolt of lightning came forth and Julius vanished. There was nothing left of him and he was completely gone from Himitsu’s sight.

“Did he run him of all people? It couldn’t be.” While Himitsu was pondering Julius’s actions she had her Artifact return to its original form. In so doing, she could hear the sounds of footsteps coming from far away.



“Huh? Captain Crowley?” The one who came running her way was Asagami Iuli.

“Oh my, good afternoon, Iuli-kun.”

“Good afternoon. Huh? Um, captain, wasn’t there someone here?”

“No, there was not anyone else here. It was only I,” answered Himitsu as she lied to him without changing a single expression on her face which leads Iuli to lean his head in contemplation.

“That’s weird, I could have sworn I felt master’s presence just now, though.”

“He’s sharp,” Himitsu then thought to herself.

“So it was not I that he was running from but from this boy. Well, he never had any intention of fighting me to begin with, I’m sure,” thought Himitsu. Letting out a sigh in her mind, Himitsu then went about questioning Iuli.

“Iuli-kun, you are rather fond of your master, are you not?”

“Eh? Oh no, nonono, I don’t like him at all. He’s just a good for nothing old man who does nothing but drink and piss me off like nobody else. I end up thinking ‘he should just die,’ every day.” Iuli then went on to deny it with a forced smile.

“But, well... I am... Grateful to him, though. To me he’s something like a dad.” Himitsu said nothing to this she felt a twinge of pain in her chest at his words that were free of malice or insincerity. Envisioning him and his master fighting to the death one day Himitsu could not help but feel pity for him. The result of which she was sure was going to be nothing short of tragic.

“Ah, this is bad! It’s already time! I’m sorry, I’ve gotta go!” yelled Iuli as he looked at the clock in the rear garden.

“Where are you going?”

“To take a makeup test,” As for Yukiha she was recovering at a surprisingly steady rate. She thought that she not only used up her bodily energy but her life energy as well but in the course of three days she had made an almost complete recovery.

Even more so as she seemed to be in even better shape than she was before, So much so that it was even excessive if not sickening. As far as her guilt and punishment were concerned...

“Please, there is nothing for you to worry about, Yukiha-san,” said Crowley Himitsu who went out of her way to visit her and began talking to her as she was waking up. Himitsu then went on to say that everything that happened the other day was going to be treated as a training accident.

“I have resolved the whole thing as an error in the third training area’s control system that led to it destroying itself. As for triggering the emergency alarm and everything that implies I will have your punishment is a written letter of apology as well as a few days house arrest. This will be your punishment for doing such dangerous training by yourself.” Hearing about this unnecessary manipulation of information Yukiha could not help but be perplexed.

“Wh-Why? Just what... What has become of my body?” questioned Yukiha as she tried to get out of bed but then Himitsu gently put her hand to Yukiha’s shoulder.

“I would like to ask that you not tell anyone about this, please. This is for both our sakes, okay?” Despite Himitsu having showered her with her kind gaze and words Yukiha felt as though something sharp was at the back of her throat. She felt as though she was at the source of everything.

“I am expecting great things from you,” said Himitsu as she ended the conversation with some words of encouragement and then left the room.

“Just how much does the captain know about that ‘Headless Witch?’” Yukiha could not help but get the bad feeling that there was something lurking at the very depths of her being. The shapeless, black mana was lying dormant inside her however it still had not disappeared yet. Yukiha could do nothing but wonder. Now it was the present. Iuli was taking yet another makeup test. It was here that Yukiha wished to make peace with Seria as well as watch Iuli take his makeup test. The test was the same as the one the week before. The location was the underground training area. His opponent was Mishima Momo. The means of passing was to dodge the attacks of her claymen and land a single hit on her. So in essence, at its very core, this test was impossible for him to pass.

“Do your best, Nii-sama,” said Seria as she seemed to seriously cheer him on but as well also seemed to mock him. Just so you know, she had already made peace with Yukiha. When both of their faces met at the same time they both apologized and the two of them were able to make peace with one another right away.

“Yashiro-san has passed this test so make sure you try to pass it, too, Nii-sama!”

“That’s right! Honestly, just what is that man doing?” said Yukiha as she could not watch him but felt jealous of him at the same time. For what she saw was Iuli struggling like he did last time. Without even meaning to, Yukiha found herself thinking about what happen several days earlier. Being swallowed up by a shapeless power and Iuli looking straight at her saying, “you do something about it.”

“Honestly,” Yukiha thought to herself, “just how irresponsible is he?” Yukiha then slightly closed her eyes and let the corners of her lips curl and show a forced smile.

“Do something about it... Indeed, I will do just that.” Be it either her mother or the headless witch she will do something about all of them; the reason, because she was strong, because she had a strength that was recognized by the world’s strongest man.

“However, he truly is an awkward man, isn’t he... Even if he says that he won’t hit women there has to be a better way of doing it than this, isn’t there? This is just pathetic.”

“Yukiha, do not say it that way. Iuli is doing his best, isn’t he?” said Seria behind her as she replied to her deploring how Iuli was handling his test. It then appeared that Yashiro had returned after finished her earlier test and had taken a shower. Yukiha was a little disgruntled but then turned around and could not help but be shocked at what she saw.

“Just what is with all that?” Yashiro had a rather strange assortment of things with her. She had a small tub with a new bar of soap, shampoo and as well had a new bath towel with her. In addition, for some odd reason, she had a shampoo hat on as well. Though she had come back she looked as though she was ready for the showers.

“This is all so I can wash Iuli’s back,” answered Yashiro bluntly to which Yukiha was just speechless.

“Wha-Wha-“

“My duty today is to comfort Iuli after his hard day of work. I was thinking that I wanted to wash every inch of Iuli after he’s gotten dirty from the makeup test. The shower room here is cramped but if we stick close together I am sure it will work out.”

“Sti-Stick close together?! Yo-You can’t do that, As if something so immoral would be allowed!”

“Why?”

“Just know that you can’t.” As Yashiro looked on at Yukiha with a look of puzzlement while Yukiha was busy showing her disapproval while her face was bright red:

“Ah, then I will be the one to wash his back in your stead,” an unexpected development took place.

“If it is with his little sister then there is no problem whatsoever.”

“Just what do you think you’re saying, Seria?!”

“Hmmm, but, it’s just that we used to bathe a lot together in the past.”

“No, when you were children it was not a problem, but-“

“I believe it has been about a year since his last one.”

“That pervert hasn’t taken a shower in a year?!” It was here when the three girls were becoming loud and fussy that Yashiro then went on to say, “ahaa, then shall I go in with him? I will be sure to wash every inch of him as well as this and that, too.” All three beautiful girls then came to speak happily with one another and with bright expressions on their faces. It was here then that Lucia von Elde Fern came in wearing a Seijun academy uniform. Though she was wearing a uniform she wore it in a casual way and made a large opening in the bust. In her hand was a confection that she ate as she strolled in with a carefree smile on her face.

“Lucia... Just what are you doing here?”

“Hello, Yukiha-chan. I came to hang out for a bit. Ah, I’m sorry but I just had to borrow your clothes for a bit, too.”

“Wha-?! That’s my uniform?! Just how did you get it?!”

“I used my power and snuck in just like that.”

“That’s stealing! For that matter... Just where and what have you been doing up until now?”

“Now, now, you don’t have to worry about me. Ah-ah, but when all is said and done, these clothes are tight around the chest.” It was here then that something inside Yukiha snapped. It was almost completely by reflex that she reached for her Artifact and then tried to get into a fighting stance. However, just before doing so, all her thinking came to a standstill as she saw the confection that was in Lucia’s hand.

“Yo-You... Tha-Tha-Tha-That... Gateau au chocolat is-“

“Hm? Oh, this? It was just lying around. It really is delicious,” replied Lucia casually as she ate another spoonful. Yukiha’s shoulders began to tremble and her anger reached explosive proportions.

“That was the gateau au chocolat I made for Iuli!” screamed Yukiha but then realized what she had just said.

“Ummm... N-No, I mean, I ended up making too much, so-“ went Yukiha as she desperately tried to correct herself but it was already too late.

“O-Oooh? For you to make Nii-sama’s favorite, it would seem you like Nii-sama a great deal, don’t you. One could even say you hold quite a considerable amount for affection for him,” stated Seria who, though her face was placid enough, her eyes were burning with jealousy.

“I see, something homemade is an option as well, isn’t it. From now on I will make all of Iuli’s meals,” remarked Yashiro as she found a new way to repay the debt she owes Iuli.

“Hmmm, all right, I’ll eat the whole thing,” said Lucia with a mischievous smile as she went for the last bit of the chocolate inside the box.

“Aah! Sto-Stop, Lucia! Don... Don’t eat all of it!” yelled Yukiha as she desperately tried to protect her homemade confection. As all of them were making a ruckus in the audience stands Mishima Momo could be seen in the very middle of the training area giving the signal that the test was over. Filthy with dirt Iuli then lifted his head and asked how he did. He failed Momo declared to which Iuli let his shoulders droop. The world’s strongest being, Asagami Iuli, due to his failing the makeup test was still a D-rank mage.

Afterword

A main character that is even more hopeless than the last boss!

Such was what I first thought I had or more the theme I came up with when I started writing this. It was with those feelings in mind that, whether for better or for worse, the main character is the “strongest.” When you look at the word “strongest” it means “stronger than everyone.” In terms of what it means in reality the main character that became the strongest in the world has attained a whole other level of strength and even more beyond that. Enough so he could change the world but, even so, wishes to have fun in life, for those of you who are too busy and just want a summary it is pretty much: the overpowered main character, which doesn’t discriminate against any gender, sends enemies flying with his punches. Such is Nozomi Kota for you. As far as the original story goes my taste has changed since I started working on it but as long as you enjoyed it then I am perfectly happy. This was my first time writing a battle royal’s story like this but I got to have a lot of fun writing it.

Now for acknowledgments.

To my editor thank you, thank for always being there for me. You were instrumental in getting my story off the ground. You even went as far as giving me your own opinions on details of the story for which I cannot thank you enough. Yuunagi-sama, thank you so very much for your many fantastic illustrations, the female characters are unbelievably cute and the male characters and weapons were super cool; everything about them were so stylish and really fantastic. I’ve actually been a fan of yours for a long time so I’m really happy that we got to work together. Finally would be all of you readers out there. You have my greatest thanks of all! So with that, if the fates allow, let us meet again. Nozomi Kota

Hello, this is Yuunagi who has been put in charge of illustrations for this work. Ever since I first read the plot and the original manuscript I found myself liking it so much that I ended up reading through the whole thing and became addicted to the world view in One Kill (the abbreviation I just gave it). For me personally I like Io-kun! Even if he does end up getting beat with a single attack (lol). But it wasn't so much that he was weak it was just that Iuli was too strong and I hope you all understand that! As such, as a reader, I look forward to seeing him redeem himself.

Last things to mention are my thanks to my editor _____-san for managing my schedule. Nozomi Kota-sensei for inviting to be a part of this fantastic book. Lastly would be all of you for getting this book! Thank you all so much!

Yuunagi

They did not show up much this time and it was such a pity so I made a final illustration with the members of the middle school section.

